

1999 Architectural Survey of Old Town Lafayette Survey Report

A Cooperative Project Conducted by:

Colorado Historical Society
Lafayette Historic Preservation Board
City of Lafayette
Cathleen M. Norman, Consultant

This project was funded by the City of Lafayette, by a State Historical Fund grant award from the Colorado Historical Society, and by Western Historical Studies, Inc.

Thanks to:

Lafayette Historic Preservation Board

Bonnie Basso, Dana Coffield, Julie Kerk, Bob Lyon, Jeff Medanich, Steven Mehls, Andy Proctor, Emery Tracy, Vicki Trumbo

Grant Administrator – Susan Koster

Lafayette Mayor – Carolyn McIntosh

Lafayette City Council

Dennis Buck, Mark Hoskins, Sue Klempan, Tom Hogue, Mike Romero, Susan Wei

Lafayette City Administrator – Gary Klaphake

Colorado Historical Society – Suzanne Doggett

Project consultant – Cathleen Norman, Preservation Publishing

Project photographer – Bob McLaughlin

Cover photographs by Cathleen Norman, Bob McLaughlin and courtesy Lafayette Historical Society.

Clockwise, starting at top: Simpson Street facing east, Wennberg residence at 210 E. Simpson, Moon residence at 302 E. Simpson, Moon boarding house at 211 E. Cleveland, Simpson Mine.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	1
Survey Area	2
Survey Area Map	3
Lafayette Area Historic Contexts	4
Pre-Settlement	4
Agriculture	6
Coal Mining	8
Labor Unions	12
Transportation.....	15
Community Planning and Development	17
Commerce	21
Research Design	23
Survey Methodology	23
Survey Results	25
Old Town Lafayette Development Patterns	25
Old Town Lafayette Architectural Character.....	28
Final Conclusions	32
Present Day Challenges.....	34
Recommendations	36
Bibliography	38
Glossary.....	39
APPENDICES	
Survey Site List.....	A-1
Previously-Recorded Sites for Lafayette.....	B-1
Old Town Lafayette Architecture brochure.....	C-1

1999 Old Town Lafayette Survey

Survey Report

Introduction

The 1999 Old Town Lafayette Survey documented and evaluated 56 sites within the original city plat. Goals of the project were multi-fold: 1) to identify sites or districts potentially eligible for the State or National Registers; 2) to identify sites or districts potentially eligible as local landmarks under Lafayette's impending preservation ordinance; and 3) to provide architectural criteria for developing a local preservation ordinance. The survey area was approximately two-thirds of the original town, platted in 1889 by Mary E. Miller after she found a rich coal seam on her east Boulder County ranch. The survey budget limited the project to an 18-block area bounded by Baseline, Cleveland and Foote Streets, and Public Road (see Survey Map). The project excluded the Old Town area south of Cleveland – Cannon and Emma Streets— as well as the historic area west of Public Road. The City hopes to survey these areas as a future effort.

The project began with a reconnaissance survey of 210 sites from February to April 1999. Architectural data and ownership data were gathered for each site, and each site was photographed. The reconnaissance survey concluded by selecting 56 sites for further documentation and evaluation. These sites were identified as potentially eligible for listing in the National, State, or local register, based on architectural significance, association with the Lafayette coal mining industry, and architectural integrity. For each property, an individual site form was prepared and submitted in July 1999.

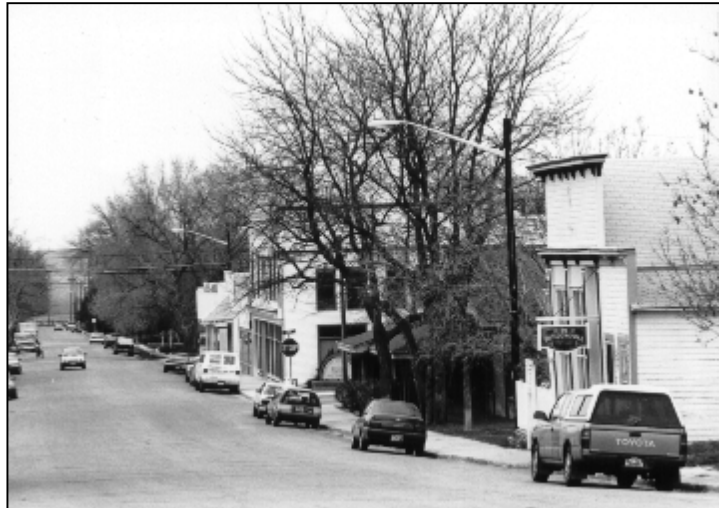
The survey provided additional community benefits. It produced a database of site information that can be used by the Historic Preservation Board (HPB) and perhaps provided to the public via a website. It organized historical information into a computerized data base accessible at the Lafayette Library. The survey also sparked residents' interest in Old Town and its history. The *Lafayette News* published several news articles on the survey and historic Old Town neighborhood. Cathleen Norman, project consultant, used survey information to lead a well-attended walking tour on May 9 for Historic Preservation Week (see tour brochure is in the Appendix. Ms. Norman also made a presentation describing the survey to the Lafayette Historical Society.

The survey was carried out under the guidance of the Lafayette HPB and administered by Susan Koster. Steve Mehls, chair of the HPB, provided direct project guidance and critiqued survey report drafts. The project was partially funded by a grant from the State Historical Society, with a cash match provided by the City of Lafayette and Western Historical Studies, Inc.

Survey Area

The area for the 1999 Lafayette survey encompassed approximately two-thirds of the original 1889 town plat. Boundaries of the 18-block area were Baseline and Cleveland Streets on the north and south, and Foote Street and Public Road on the east and west. It excludes Cannon and Emma Streets. The town's east-west orientation layout was opposite of the north-south orientation of the commercial districts of neighboring cities in east Boulder County — Louisville, Longmont, and Loveland. The layout was dictated by the Simpson and Cannon coal mine that was located at the east edge of Lafayette. The survey area slopes slightly uphill from east to west.

The neighborhood is distinguished by large city lots. Lots are 40' wide, rather than the typical 25'-wide lots seen in mining-dependent cities of the late 1800s and early 1900s. Large trees shade the wide quiet streets. Lafayette is surrounded by hundred-year-old farms and historic ranches, outnumbered by recently-built housing developments.



The historic commercial district in the 300 and 400 blocks of Simpson Street lies in the center of the survey area.



Survey Area Map

Lafayette Historic Contexts

Coal mining was the driving force behind Lafayette's founding and growth, and the coal mining era (1889 – 1946) is its chief period of historic significance. The city is located in the Northern Coal Field that encompasses 6,800 square miles stretching from Marshall in southeast Boulder County to Erie and Frederick in southwestern Weld County.¹ Platted in 1889 by Mary E. Miller after she found a rich coal seam on her east Boulder County ranch, Lafayette was a city of miners. These men worked at the Simpson Mine at the east edge of town and at many other nearby coal mines. Today little physical evidence of this important extractive industry remains. The tipples, mining equipment, and slag heaps are gone. The chief remnants of the coal industry that dominated the area from the 1870s through the 1940s are the miners' towns — Lafayette, Louisville, Superior, Erie, Frederick, and Marshall.

Lafayette grew as a miner's residential community, but also served as a supply town for the outlying coal mines and camps and for surrounding farms and ranches. The Simpson Street commercial district provided retail goods, services, and entertainment to both miners and farmers. Local stores also sold mining supplies to coal miners who were frequently expected to provide their own blasting powder, fuses, and drill steel. Mercantile stores sold farming equipment. The Simpson Street butcher shops and grocery markets were outlets for dairy products and beef from nearby farms and ranches, as well as canned goods and other food items from elsewhere.

***Historic Simpson Street
Commercial District,
east view from 400
block, Bank of
Lafayette on corner.***



Photo courtesy Lafayette Historical Society

Pre-Settlement

Before Europeans and Euro-Americans began entering the American West, Colorado's eastern plains were inhabited by nomadic indigenous peoples. The Cheyenne and Arapaho were the last in a series of tribes that occupied the prairies east of the Rocky Mountains. They hunted buffalo as their chief food source, following buffalo herds on horseback and on foot.

French trappers entered the area in the early nineteenth century, seeking beaver pelts in demand for beaver top hats fashionable in upper-class English society. Initially, these native peoples co-existed peaceably with the newcomers, and traded infrequently with the European trappers. The fur trappers followed the tributaries of the South Platte River west into the Rocky Mountains. Ceran St. Vrain built Fort Saint Vrain near the confluence of the Platte and St. Vrain Rivers, six miles northwest of the present town of

Platteville. This trading post was an upper outlet of the Bent Brothers' fur trading empire. By the 1840s, however, fur trade was declining. Beaver hats had fallen from popularity and trappers had nearly exhausted the Rocky Mountain beaver supply. The buffalo robe trade flourished briefly, prolonging the fur trading industry.

During the early 1800s, several exploration parties entered Rocky Mountain region to map its reaches and assess its natural resources. Through the 1803 Louisiana Purchase the United States acquired from France the region west of the Mississippi. President Thomas Jefferson sent the Lewis and Clark expedition to explore the Missouri River, and in 1806 sent Zebulon Pike to investigate the Arkansas River, the new border between the U. S. and Spanish territory. Stephen Long led an 1820 expedition to map the South Platte River, entering present-day northeastern Colorado and followed the river south. Long called the area between the Missouri River and the Rocky Mountains "the Great American Desert," a title that discouraged farming and ranching interests in the plains for decades. By the mid 1800s, the area was peopled sparsely by lingering trappers and traders, Native American tribes, and a few Euro-American settlers.

In 1859, ten years after the 1848 – 1849 California Gold Rush, mineral riches brought gold seekers into the Rocky Mountain region. A gold discovery near the confluence of the Platte River and Cherry Creek attracted national attention and drew thousands of prospectors across the plains and into the foothills. The discovery was made by a prospecting party led by Russell Greene from the gold mining region in Lumpkin County, Georgia. Denver City, Boulder, Colorado City, Canon City and other supply towns sprang up along the Front Range to serve the mountain gold and silver districts. Boulder County was formed as one of the original Colorado counties, with Boulder as its county seat. The settlement quickly prospered as a mining supply town.

Soon settlers were cultivating the eastern plains, often producing food for the mining camps. A road developed along the Front Range, roughly following the Cherokee Trail between Fort Laramie and Bent's Fort. This route became a stagecoach line and eventually evolved into present-day Highway 287. The 1862 Homestead Act, which gave title to 160 acres to individuals filing claim and working the land for five years, furthered settlement of the eastern plains.

As these settlers plowed the area and built sod and woodframe dwellings, friction rose between them and the Native Americans. The situation worsened in the early 1860s, when the Civil War called to arms the soldiers who had manned the frontier forts protecting homesteaders and other immigrants. Wagon trains entering the territory were attacked and their wagons plundered and burned. The conflict escalated with the 1864 murder of the Hungate family on a ranch 25 miles southeast of Denver and subsequent Sand Creek Massacre. These so-called Indian Wars discouraged settlement until the 1867 Medicine Lodge Creek Treaty. The treaty removed the Colorado Cheyenne and Arapaho to Indian Territory in Oklahoma and the northern Arapaho and Cheyenne to a reservation at Wind River, Wyoming. The Native American "problem" thus solved, wagon roads, railroad track and barbed wire fences began criss-crossing the open plains.

Agriculture (1860 – present)

Agriculture was eastern Boulder County's first industry. Colorado's eastern plains became available to settlers through the Homestead Act in 1862. Previous to 1862, acreage could be pre-empted or purchased. Homesteaders followed gold-seekers into the region, filing claim and "proving up" 160-acre parcels. Homesteaders included husband-wife partnerships, bachelors, spinsters, and widows. Among them were prospectors unlucky in the West Boulder County gold and silver camps. Several military bounties were given to Civil War Veterans or their widows as pensions. Many of them sold their acreage, sight unseen, to people like Mary and Lafayette Miller.

The Millers arrived by wagon train in the area in 1863, married just months earlier in Iowa. They are credited with bringing the area's first threshing machine. The Millers settled on 160 acres near Burlington, a non-extant stage station south of present-day Longmont near the Saint Vrain River. They moved the following year to Rock Creek, south of present-day Lafayette. Here they ran a hotel and a stage station on the Denver to Laramie stage route. In 1871 the Millers bought the acreage that would later become the Lafayette townsite, where they grew hay and raised dairy cattle and beef. They moved into Boulder in 1874, where Lafayette was part owner in a meat market. It is likely that beef raised on the Miller ranch supplied this operation. Lafayette Miller died suddenly in 1878, and Mrs. Miller, now a widow six children, continued operating the farm with the help of her sons. The 1884 discovery of coal on her property led Mrs. Miller to lease the Simpson Mine on the southeast corner of her ranch and develop the city of Lafayette on the rest of her acreage.

Unique in its development a townsite, the Miller farmstead was one of several in the area. Other local homesteaders, ranchers, and farmers were Adolph (Waeneche) Waneka, William Barrowman, Julia A. Harmon, Thomas N. Willis, and John B. Foote, the father of Mary Miller. Earliest was the Waneka farm, homestead by Adolph and Anna Waneka who arrived in the area in 1860 and ran a stage station at Coal Creek. Adolph boosted local agriculture by building a dam to provide water for irrigation. This reservoir later supplied water for the boilers for a regional power plant built at Lafayette in 1906. Today the reservoir is owned and maintained by the City as Waneka Lake Park.

Local agriculture was greatly aided by irrigation. Early homesteaders, such as the Wanekas, Goodhues, Harmons, and Millers collaborated on building ditches. The Goodhue, South Boulder (originally Prince), and Coal Creek Ditches provided water to Lafayette area farmers and ranchers.



The Bell Cheese Factory processed milk from local dairies.

Photo courtesy Lafayette Historical Society

The agriculture industry consisted chiefly of grain fields, beef ranches, and dairy farms. Local crops consisted of wheat, barley, corn, and alfalfa hay. Grain was sold at the Lafayette Flour and Feed Store and other local outlets. Local beef supplied the one or two meat markets operating on Simpson Street, as well as several local grocery stores. Waneka dairy provided milk for the cheese factory. Vegetables such as beans, potatoes, and peas also were grown commercially. In the 1900s, sugar beet cultivation was introduced around Lafayette, as well as northeastern, eastern, and western Colorado.

However, a shortage of irrigation water prevented the success of this crop.² Each farm also had a large

vegetable garden and orchard. A colorful 1930s newspaper article described the east Boulder County orchards that attracted Denver residents on Sunday automobile excursions. Farmers even sold fruit and fruit blossoms to these travelers. In the late 1940s, the Tanaka family cultivated melons and sweet corn between Lafayette and Longmont. The Colorado Mushroom Co. begun near Lafayette in 1976, operated for about a decade.

Several historic local businesses and organizations attest to the prominence of agriculture in Lafayette. The nearby Boulder Valley Grange, begun in 1894, met in the one-room Davidson School that also served as church and community center. (Lafayette area farms that are on the State or National Register or honored as Colorado Centennial Farms are listed in the Appendix of this report). The Lafayette-Louisville Milling and Grain Company operated grain elevators beside the railroad tracks for decades. Local agricultural products sustained a pickle factory and a cheese factory. The Farmers' and Miners' State Bank operated in the 1890s and early 1900s. The Farmer's State Bank opened in 1920 at 400 Simpson and merged with First National Bank two years later.³

Cattle ranching was a leading agricultural activity. One of the earliest operations was that of Adolph Waneka, who grazed cattle in the Boulder County foothills in summer and at Lafayette in winter. The Miller and Moon families were active in ranching and slaughter, and operated the slaughter house and butcher shop. Several old-time ranchers got their start helping the Miller family on their ranch southeast of town. Some older residents remember cattle herds passing through the city.⁴ The Waneka family raised cattle and reared draft horses. Other area ranches also provided saddle stock for farm and ranch work, as well as mules for the underground mines. Horse-drawn conveyances continued as a chief mode of transportation through the 1930s, with a livery stable at 407 – 409 Simpson serving the traveling public.⁵



***Waneka
Farm***

As a local industry, agriculture was second only to coal mining. The two seasonal industries were inter-dependent, drawing upon the same labor force. In summer, coal miners labored in the farms and fields when the demand for heating coal diminished. The Colorado & Southern Railroad line, built to Lafayette to serve the coal mines, also transported Lafayette grain to Denver and other markets. Agriculture suffered during the arid 1930s, the Dust Bowl period that drove many homesteaders off the eastern plains.

Today agriculture plays a minor role today in the local economy. Cattle ranching is no longer a leading industry. Agricultural operations are small farms rather than large concerns. Chief crops are winter wheat, corn, soy beans, and alfalfa. Since the 1950s, small residential farms have sprouted up through eastern Boulder County. Rather than providing a livelihood, these farms are residences of workers who commute to jobs elsewhere. Families bought acreage where they could raise horses and farm animals and cultivate large vegetable gardens. According to Joe Distel, who owned the Lafayette Elevator during the 1960s, there was a strong demand for feed grains.⁶ Today, the rural landscape surrounding Lafayette is rapidly disappearing, as agriculture acreage is developed into suburban neighborhoods.

Coal Mining (1887 – 1946)



Simpson Mine – photo courtesy Lafayette Miners museum

The coal mining era (1889 – 1946) serves as Lafayette’s chief period of historic significance. Coal mining was the reason for Lafayette’s founding, and for over a half century was the economic backbone of the town. The coal mining history of Lafayette reflects the geological history of the area. Millions of years ago, a prehistoric swamp covered the Rocky Mountain foothills. Coal deposits were formed under geological pressure as decayed vegetable matter was covered with layers of clay, sand, and pebbles. These deposits, several hundred feet beneath the surface, were mined beginning in the 1860s. The Boulder – Weld County fields are bituminous, rather than the harder anthracite type of coal found in Pennsylvania coal fields. The mineral composition of the bituminous coal limited its use. It contained a high moisture content which made it crumbly and unsuitable for long-term storage or long-distance transportation. Bituminous coal was also prone to spontaneous combustion.⁷

The demand for coal reflected the industrial revolution that had begun in Great Britain and swept the U. S. starting in the mid-1800s. Coal was key to American industry, fueling eastern railroads, factories, and mills. Industrial conglomerates emerged. Frequently the same financial interests mined the coal, operated the railroads hauling coal from mine sites to urban and industrial centers, and ran the coal-fueled manufacturing facilities. Similar to the East, many Colorado coal mines were owned by railroad companies and/or ore processing concerns. The largest of these was Colorado Coal & Iron, which originated as a subsidiary of the Denver & Rio Grande railroad line. That firm evolved into the Pueblo-based milling conglomerate Colorado Fuel & Iron Company that controlled a majority of southeastern Colorado coal mines.

The rich coal region extending diagonally from southern Boulder County northeast into Weld County was called the Northern Coal Field or the Boulder – Weld Coal Field. Coal mining commenced in 1859 in Marshall, five miles south of Boulder,

one of the oldest coal mining operations in the western U.S. Over 51 coal mines operated at Marshall Mesa with railroad connection to Golden, Boulder, and Denver from 1878 to 1932.⁸ This mining activity spread northwest, spurring the founding and growth of Erie (1876), Louisville (1878), Lafayette (1889), Superior (1896), and Frederick (1907), as well as. The northern portion of the coal fields supported over 80 mines.⁹

Colorado coal was used to heat homes and buildings, fuel the railroads, and generate electricity for homes, businesses, industrial plants, and manufacturing facilities. Coal was also key to gold and silver mining. It produced electricity to run mining operations and ore processing mills, and it fueled the smelters that refined these precious metals. The soft, crumbly nature of the bituminous coal from the Boulder-Weld coal mines limited its use to domestic heating in Boulder County and Denver. It was also burned to generate steam for local power plants, and to heat steam that powered railroad engines. For example, the United Coal Company supplied fuel for the Union Pacific Railroad.

Coal mining began in Lafayette after a fabulous 14-foot-wide coal seam was coal discovered on Mary Miller's farm in 1884. William P. Cannon sunk the first coal mine shaft there in 1887. John H. Simpson, a family friend of the Millers, established the Simpson Mine soon thereafter. In 1889, completion of the railroad to Lafayette launched full-scale coal production. Mrs. Miller received 12.5 cents per ton in royalties for coal mined on her property. Recognizing the opportunity for urban development, she platted a 150-acre parcel as the city of Lafayette, and sold residential lots to the miners. Mrs. Miller's was a chief influence on city development for several decades, as described later in this report.

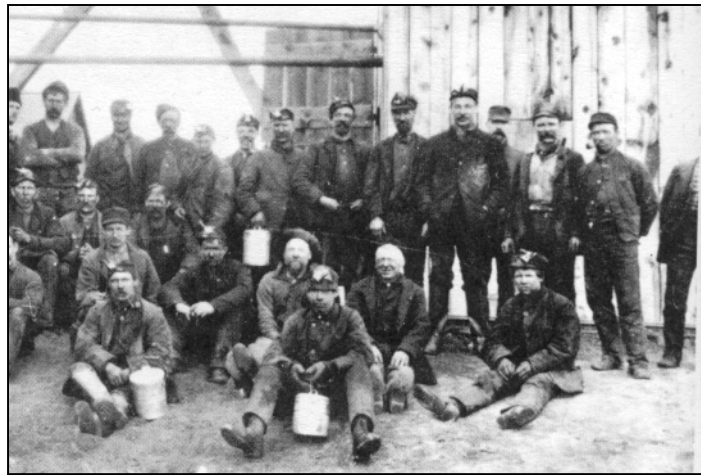


Photo courtesy Lafayette Historical Society

Mrs. Miller received 12.5 cents per ton in royalties for coal mined on her property. Recognizing the opportunity for urban development, she platted a 150-acre parcel as the city of Lafayette, and sold residential lots to the miners. Mrs. Miller's was a chief influence on city development for several decades, as described later in this report.

By 1899, the Simpson Mine was shipping 40 train cars of coal daily to Denver, Boulder, and the mining districts in west Boulder County. The Simpson Mine was the largest of the Boulder and Weld County coal mines, producing over 4,125,693 million tons during its 1889 - 1926 operation. The surface plant — the coal tipple and other equipment — was located at the east end of Simpson and Cleveland Streets. Most of the coal deposit lay beneath the townsite of Lafayette, with tunnels some 250 feet beneath the surface. After the Simpson Mine closed in 1926, the site was developed with residential housing and a mobile home neighborhood in the 1940s – 1970s.

In addition to the Simpson, there were several other notable local coal mines. The Cannon Mine operating 1888 – 1898 was established by William P. Cannon at the east end of Cannon Street. The 1902 Lafayette Telephone Directory listed business numbers for five Lafayette mines: New Colorado Coal Company, Simpson Mine, Rex Mine, Hecla Mine, and Strathmore Mine. Mary Miller's sons ran the Strathmore Mine on the southern edge of the Miller ranch from 1901 to 1919. Her son Thomas was killed there, decapitated by a mining skip in 1902.¹⁰

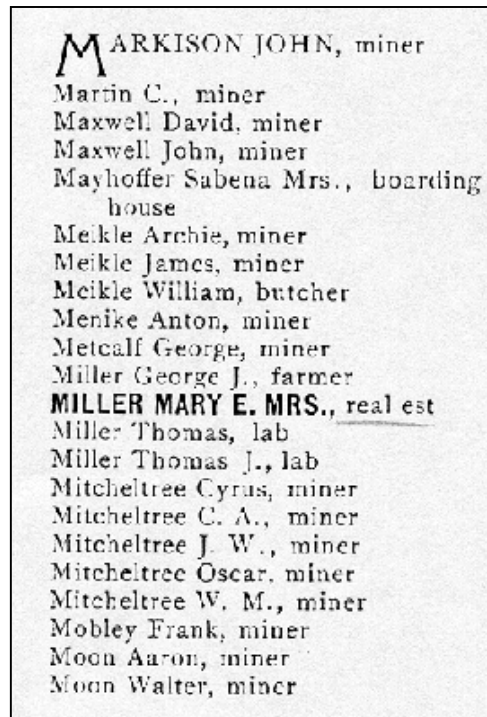
The most significant local mines included the following:

Black Diamond #2 (1933 - 1956)
Cambro (1917 – 1928)
Capitol (1908 – 1926)
Columbine (n/a - 1946)
Excelsior (1890 - 1899 - 1934)
Gladstone (1890 – 1906)
Hi-Way (1930 - 1954)
Mitchell (1893 – 1920)
Simpson (1889 - 1926)
Strathmore (1901 – 1919)
Senator (1906 – 1913)
Standard (1887, 1893, 1905 - 1937)
Vaughn (1897 – 1906)¹¹

These operations ringed the city: the Cambro, Capitol, Standard, and Hi-Way on the east; Columbine and Mitchell mines northeast; Vaughn south; and Black Diamond #2 northwest.¹²

Company towns or “camps” sprang up around the entrance to several mines, providing worker housing. Each had a company store, and some even had schoolhouses, and other facilities. These mine camps disappeared in the 1920s and 1930s, as the mine sites closed and as automobile transportation became available to miners. A number of the small hipped-roof or front-gabled dwellings were moved from the mining camps into Lafayette and Louisville. The small houses were usually expanded, especially to accommodate indoor plumbing. They are the only physical evidence of the mining activity that shaped the area from the 1870s through the 1940s.

Lafayette was a city of miners. City directories from the late 1890s and early 1900s list chiefly coal miners and mine-related occupations such as engineer, track layer, machinist, blacksmith. (Farmers and merchants rival as the second occupation.) There were also a number of independent coal operators. Long-time resident Clifford Alderson recalled “Everybody had a hole in the ground to mine coal earlier.”¹³ Many workers were experienced coal miners from England, Wales, and Scotland, natives of the British Isles where the industrial revolution and coal mining had originated. For example, John, Joseph, and James Simpson emigrated from England. The Lewis family, previous owners of the Lewis House Museum, were Welsh natives.



MARKISON JOHN, miner
Martin C., miner
Maxwell David, miner
Maxwell John, miner
Mayhoffer Sabena Mrs., boarding house
Meikle Archie, miner
Meikle James, miner
Meikle William, butcher
Menike Anton, miner
Metcalf George, miner
Miller George J., farmer
MILLER MARY E. MRS., real est
Miller Thomas, lab
Miller Thomas J., lab
Mitcheltree Cyrus, miner
Mitcheltree C. A., miner
Mitcheltree J. W., miner
Mitcheltree Oscar, miner
Mitcheltree W. M., miner
Mobley Frank, miner
Moon Aaron, miner
Moon Walter, miner

1892 directory

By 1890, Colorado coal production had risen to over 3 million short tons annually.¹⁴ Lafayette coal supplied the Western Light & Power plant built in 1902 to power the interurban railway that connected Denver with Boulder County communities. Coal from the Simpson Mine fueled the \$1 million Colorado Power Plant that in 1906 electrified the cities of Lafayette, Boulder, Brighton, Longmont, Berthoud, Loveland, Fort Collins, Greeley, and Cheyenne.

From 1905 to 1930, Colorado coal production averaged 10 million tons annually. The completion of an oil pipeline from Texas to Denver in 1928 brought a marked decline to the state's coal mining. By 1934, annual output had dropped to 5.2 million tons, it rose slightly during World War II.¹⁵ Meanwhile, mining dominated the Lafayette economy through the 1940s. The close of the coal mining era came in 1946, when the Rocky Mountain Fuel Company filed bankruptcy and closed the Columbine Mine. Nevertheless, mining continued on a minor scale for another decade. The last local mine, the Black Diamond #2, closed in 1956.¹⁶

Today little trace of this industrial activity remains. Slag heaps, mine dumps, coal tipples, and mining machinery are now gone. The waste dumps from a coal mine are still visible south of South Boulder Road between Louisville and Lafayette, and an intact coal tipple stands near Erie. The historic miners' neighborhoods and commercial centers that once served the mines are all the only visible remnants of the industry that dominated east Boulder County for over a half-century and employed thousands of men.

The numerous underground tunnels and "room and pillar" operations beneath the area are another legacy of this past activity. Cave-ins and subsidence have occurred in both Louisville and Lafayette due to coal mining tunnels just feet below the surface. Lafayette has experienced less subsidence than Louisville, because most of the Simpson Mine was more than 200 feet below the surface. Subsidence studies in the 1970s and 1980s preceded construction of residential neighborhoods and shopping centers atop coal operations. Some of these new developments even took their names from the extinct coal mines.

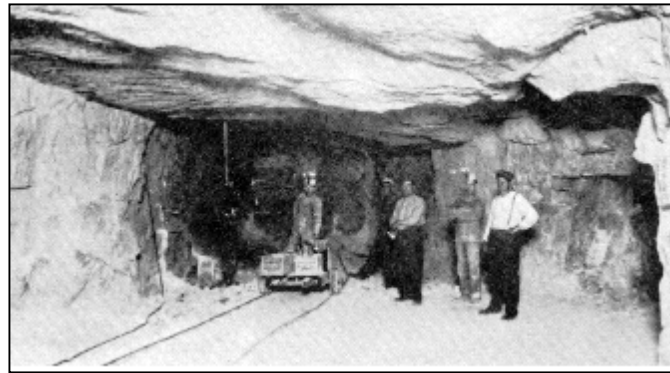


Photo courtesy Lafayette Historical Society

Labor Unions (1889 – 1946)

In the late 1800s and into the 1900s, the movement to organize labor swept the country. The nineteenth century industrial revolution was possible through capitalization and stock sales. This resulted in company assets and profits in the hands of few, and a polarization between wealthy investors and the workforce. Unions were formed to give workers bargaining power in trying to negotiate higher wages and safer working conditions. Labor unions were predominant in the coal mining industry. Workers risked underground gases, cave-ins, and death or dismemberment from explosions. On Jan. 20, 1936 an explosion at the Monarch Mine killed eight men. Many died from silicosis, also called “black lung disease,” from breathing particles from drilling.

Financial arrangements between employer and worker were usually to the detriment of miners. Miners were paid by the ton rather than by the hour or by the day. Workers often had to wait, unpaid, while waste rock was being removed from a coal vein or for railroad cars to arrive. Companies required workers to provide their own supplies, such as blasting powder, fuses, and lamps, often purchased at the company store. Lafayette’s first strike was in 1893 when miners demanded cash payment as opposed to checks.

Most notable in the Boulder – Weld Coal Fields was the “Long Strike,” (1910 – 1914). The battle between coal mine owners and the United Mine Workers began in the northern fields and spread to the Trinidad-Huerfano county mines. There it escalated into all-out warfare culminating in the August 20, 1914 Ludlow Massacre in which two women and eleven children, family members of striking miners were killed in a fire set at a tent colony 18 miles north of Trinidad. The strike endured in the Boulder – Weld county mines as well, and effected commerce, industry, and the personal lives of not only the miners but all Lafayette residents.



*Interior of Miners Union Store, once
located at 403 E. Simpson.
Photo courtesy Lafayette Historical Society.*

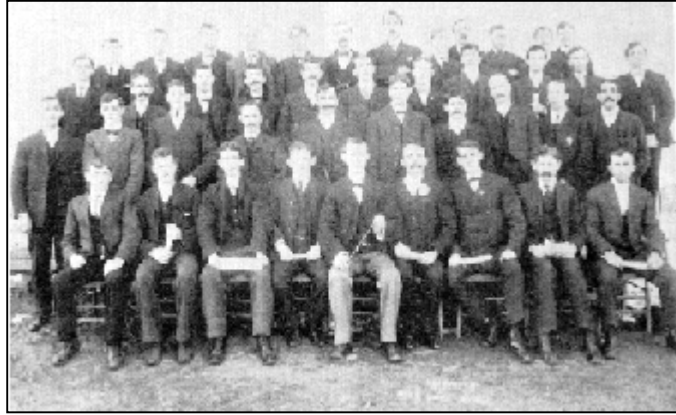
During the 1913 - 1914 period, Lafayette served as headquarters for union organization in the northern fields. Prior to 1910, the United Mine Workers of America (UMW), could claim a membership of only 15% of the workers in the Boulder - Weld Coal Field. John Lawson, famed organizer for UMW, arrived in Lafayette in 1908. He quickly organized the entire field, and moved to obtain a contract for the Louisville-Lafayette miners, which was accepted by the operators. When this contract came up for renewal in April 1910, the operators refused union demands. The coal miners went on strike. The situation escalated when the Rocky Mountain Fuel Company merged with the leading producer in the area in August 1911, intent on breaking the union. National UMW president John P. White proclaimed that “Colorado should be a good proving ground for the whole nation.” Fighting broke out in October 1913 and state militia was ordered into the area.

Lafayette was regarded as the center of the northern strike.¹⁷ Mother Jones visited the town on April 2, 1911 to encourage the union miners during the Long Strike.¹⁸

Edward Doyle, Secretary-Treasurer of the UMW, resided in Lafayette during the strike. Doyle's residence at the time could be potentially eligible for the National Register, unfortunately, it was not located during the 1999 survey. The strike finally ended in December 1914 when representatives of the UMW conceded to the decisions of a federal committee. The UMW was an active force for nearly 30 years, listed in city directories and operating the "Miners Opera House" until the late 1930s.

Welsh Miners' Chorus

*Photo courtesy Lafayette
Historical Society*



The four-year conflict had a devastating impact on the community. Striking miners and their families moved from the coal camps to a tent colony north of Baseline and east of Foote Avenue.¹⁹ Clarence Waneka remembers his father moving their family into Boulder during the latter part of the strike, because the Waneka farm was in range of bullet fire from the Vaughn Mine between state militia and striking miners.²⁰ Llewelyn Davis and other singers formed a chorus to show solidarity and support the strike.²¹ Officials at the Simpson, Vaughn, and other mines built tall fences to protect non-union workers and keep out the strikers. They also posted machine guns on mine dumps to protect non-union workers hired by the mine to replace the striking miners. Lafayette residents often slept in their cellars and basements, fearing night-time shootings. Sixteen Lafayette union strikers were arrested on December 23, 1910 and held in jail in defiance of the Whitfield injunction prohibiting congregating on the streets.²²

Many local business owners went bankrupt as a result of the Long Strike. William Moon lost his meat market in 1913, and went to work for the Miner's Union Store operated by the UMW at 403 E. Simpson. Mary Miller's Lafayette Bank failed in 1914, due to extending credit to out-of-work miners. Other strikes followed the Long Strike. Most notable is the 1927 strike at the Columbine Mine, the state militia fired upon a tent colony of striking workers just northwest of Lafayette, and shot and killed six union miners.²³ Several of these men are buried in the Lafayette cemetery west of the intersection of Baseline and Public Roads. The UMW remained an active force in the area, and appeared in the Lafayette City directory through 1937.

Several Old Town structures were associated with the labor unions. The Union Hall at 211 E. Simpson had a capacity for 300. Its proximity to city hall possibly implied a tacit support of union activity on the part of city leaders. In addition to union meetings, it was used for dances, public meetings, high school graduations, and travelling musical productions. This facility was presumably listed in the 1926 city directory as the Union Theater (205 E. Simpson) and in the 1930s directories as the Miners Opera House (no address given).

The Miners Union Store operated at 403 Simpson Street for several years. During the strike, the Baldwin-Felts detectives employed by the mining companies lodged at the Lafayette House at 600 East Simpson. The residence of Edward Doyle, Secretary-Treasurer of the State Chapter of the United Mine Workers from 1913-14, was not found in this survey. The Doyle residence would be a strong candidate for listing in the State Register, if not the National Register, if it could be located and if it retains its integrity.



Miners Union Hall, sometimes called the Miner's Opera House, formerly at 210 E. Simpson.

An interesting impact of the labor union is the absence of a city library building until the 1990s. Many Colorado communities have libraries funded by the Carnegie Foundation, established by steel magnate Andrew Carnegie. Some towns, however, refused to seek funds from the Carnegie Foundation, because of its creation by an eastern capitalist. Perhaps local labor sympathies prevented Lafayette also from doing so. Instead the Lafayette Library was located in various places in town, including commercial store buildings, the Congregational Church at 300 E. Simpson, and the new City Hall at 1290 S. Public Road.²⁴ The large new library at 775 West Baseline bears a mural depicting Mary and Lafayette Miller and nine miners in front of a Lafayette coal mine.



The misnamed Lafayette Miners' Association Stores was run by the mining company, so that the company could make profits by selling over-priced groceries, merchandise and mining supplies to employees. The store extended credit to out-of-work miners during the summer and the men repaid it when they were again on company payroll in fall and winter.

Transportation (1860s – Present)

Present-day Lafayette is located near the historic Denver – Cheyenne stage coach route. This route approximately followed the Old Cherokee Trail, developed in the 1850s, which served to link the Santa Fe Trail on the south to the Overland Trail on the north. The northern branch of the Santa Fe Trail from Kansas to New Mexico angled through the southeastern corner of present-day Colorado; the Overland Trail dipped into northern Colorado before continuing on through Wyoming and into Oregon and Washington. The stage coach route served ox- and mule-drawn freight wagons, as well as settlers traveling in covered wagons. There were a number of stage stops along this route. These included the Rock Creek station operated by the Lafayette and Mary Miller, Burlington station run by Alonzo and Mary Allen, stone-constructed Waneka station, Church station, Coal Creek station, and Buford station. During the 1860s and 1870s, wagon roads were built to connect the city of Boulder and the settlements and homesteads in the eastern part of the county.

Completion of the competing Colorado Central and Union Pacific railroads linked Denver and Golden to Wyoming in the early 1870s. The railroads, which ran north-south through Boulder County, also put the stage lines out of business and decreased wagon traffic along this route. The railroad arrived in Lafayette in 1889 to transport coal to markets in Boulder County and Denver. Lafayette was located on the branch line of the Burlington line running from Denver to Lyons, connecting to the main line of Colorado & Southern through Louisville.²⁵ The railroad served Lafayette and its coal mines for over 50 years, transporting freight, grain, lumber, supplies, passengers, and — in latter years — automobiles. There were two depots, both on the east edge of Lafayette. The Colorado & Southern was on Finch St. between Cleveland and Cannon. The Burlington depot stood east of the Simpson Mine. The C&S depot was moved to 510 E. Simpson and converted to a private residence. The Burlington Depot was destroyed.



The Colorado & Southern Depot
Photo courtesy Lafayette Miners
Museum.

Meanwhile, the historic stage line developed as an automobile road in the early 1900s. Part of it became a leg on the Lincoln Highway in the early 1920s. Today it is U.S. Highway 287. Starting in the 1920s, automobile travel exerted an influence on this thoroughfare, motivating construction of gas stations, auto garages, auto courts, motels, drive-in restaurants and the McGlothery & Thompson Auto Tourist Camp. The Lafayette Garden Club planted flower beds and trees to beautify the city and increase its attraction to travelers and visitors.²⁶ Following World War II, the thoroughfare was re-dedicated as a Blue Star memorial highway, honoring memories of servicemen and women. The rise of Public Road/U. S. 287 as a commercial thoroughfare coincided with the decline of the coal mining industry and commercial vigor of the Simpson Street commercial district. Some businesses closed. Others relocated from Simpson Street to Public road, as did the post office in the 1970s and City Hall in 1985.

Automobile transportation also took on a new significance as the coal mines closed. Lafayette residents began commuting to jobs outside the city, and Lafayette gradually became a bedroom community. In the 1950s, Interstate 25 was built seven miles east of Lafayette, aiding auto commuters. U. S. 36 (Denver - Boulder Turnpike) was built during the same period. In the 1960s, the nuclear manufacturing facility at Rocky Flats and I. B. M. computer plant near Niwot opened, providing employment. To accommodate the increase in east Boulder County auto traffic, the Boulder Diagonal was built between Longmont and Boulder. During the 1990s, South Boulder Road was widened from two to four lanes and the U.S. 287 by-pass was built west of Public Road and Old Town Lafayette.

Community Planning and Development (1889 – present)

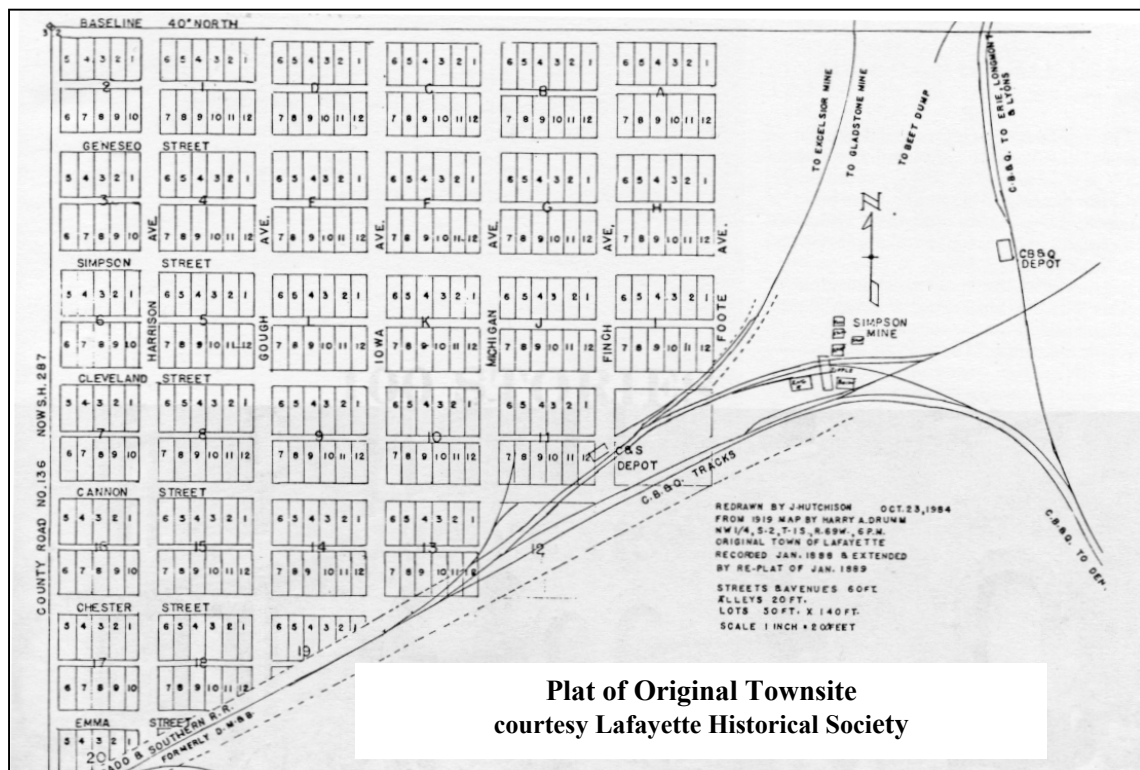
Mary Miller, affectionately known as the “Mother of Lafayette,” platted the 150-acre townsite on her ranch in 1888. She named the town for her deceased husband, Lafayette. She also named the streets for personal associations, as follows:

East-West

Geneseo – Mary Miller’s birthplace, Geneseo, NY
Simpson – Simpson Mine
Cleveland – President Grover Cleveland
Cannon – Cannon Mine
Chester – President Arthur Chester
Emma – Mary Miller’s favorite niece

North-South

Gough – originally Couch, local dentist
Michigan – Mary Miller’s girlhood home
Iowa – where Mary and Lafayette Miller were married
Foote – her maiden name



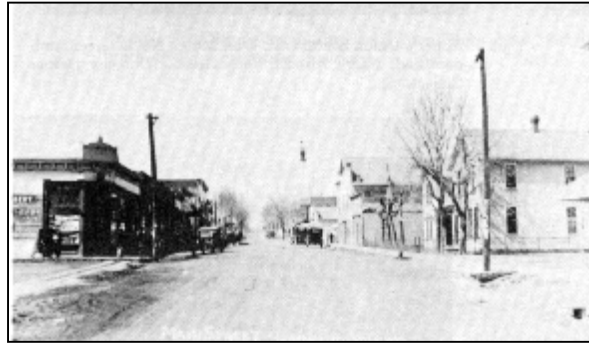
Mary Miller influenced the town in numerous ways. A staunch advocate of temperance, she included an anti-liquor clause in all land deeds on properties east of Public Road. The stipulation forbade the sale, making, or consumption of alcohol on the premises of any property in Old Town. This prompted saloonkeepers to open taverns along “Saloon Row” on the west side of Public Road. Mrs. Miller helped fund the town’s first church in 1892, by loaning money to construct the \$3,000 Congregational Church at 300 E. Simpson and paying minister’s salary out of her own pocket. She encouraged planting of elm trees, to create the shady neighborhood streets to which she was

accustomed in the Midwest and in New York.²⁷ The city's first mayor was her eldest son, 25-year-old Thomas J. Miller.

Mrs. Miller also sold residential lots. Her name appears prominently in 1890s and early 1900s city directories: **Mrs. Mary E. Miller, real estate, Mary E. Miller, dealer in town property, farm land, and coal mines and COAL LAND AND CITY LOTS, Mrs. Mary E. Miller, owner.** Her coal mining royalties and land sales profits aided her in opening the First National Bank of Lafayette (also called Lafayette Bank or Miller Bank) in 1902. She extended mortgages to workers to purchase land and build homes.

When the town petitioned for incorporation January 29, 1889, Lafayette claimed some 400 residents, two general stores, livery stables, several boarding houses, and other commercial businesses. Septimus R. Wood became mayor with this re-organization. The first post office opened February 4, 1889. The 1893 city directory called Lafayette "an important coal mining town" with good churches and schools and a population of 600. The land on which the school was built was donated by the Union Pacific Railway Co. By 1900 the city had a population of around 1,000 and the Free Library, Opera House, Society Hall, and several lodge halls.

"A Thrifty Little Coal Town"



John and Joseph Simpson were influential in both Louisville and Lafayette. The men were founders of Louisville and built the first structure in that city, the Simpson Brother store. John Simpson also served as that town's first mayor.²⁸ Joseph Simpson moved his house from Louisville to Lafayette. It still stands 303 Simpson Street, the oldest dwelling in town. Both men were involved heavily in local coal mining, in particular at the Simpson and Hi-Way Mines.

Coal mining flourished and Lafayette grew quickly. By 1906, it had a population of 1500 with nearly 1,000 coal miners.²⁹ Many lived in boarding houses, but most had homes of their own. Many dwellings built in Lafayette resembled company housing: boxy, 20' X 20' four-room cottages and tiny narrow 14' x 32' dwellings. As the mines closed, Lafayette residents bought the company houses and had them moved to vacant lots in town. Most were enlarged with rear additions or wings, to expand the average interior space of 500 to 800 square feet. These relocated houses are sprinkled throughout Old Town and Lafayette west of Public Road.

The commercial district occupied the 300 and 400 block of Simpson Street. It consisted chiefly of false-front wood-frame structures with two or three brick "blocks." Stores and businesses occupied the ground floor, upstairs rooms served as business offices or lodge halls. A fire in 1900, started in lodge hall above Noble Mercantile, destroyed most of the commercial district. Damage from the fire was estimated at \$100,000, including two stores owned by the Northern Coal Company.³⁰

In the early 1900s, Lafayette expanded west of Public Road. This neighborhood was desirable for its panoramic views of the Arapahoe Peaks and for its distance from the dirty, noisy coal mines and railroad. Several leading businessmen built large and stylish dwellings. Several churches also relocated from east to west Lafayette. The First Baptist Church, begun in a railroad “Chapel Car” moved into a permanent facility at 200 W. Cleveland in 1912.

Low wages, seasonal work, and frequent labor strikes ensured that Lafayette was never a community of bustling prosperity. It was described as a “thrifty little coal town” by a 1900 Denver news article. Evidence of this thrift is in the predominance of wood construction within town, and the small size of dwellings and businesses. Residents took other economical measures. Many families ran boarding houses to supplement family income. Early city directories show that many single adult children resided in their parents’ homes. Long-time residents also recall that Old Town residents had large vegetable gardens and chickens to stock their families’ dinner tables.

***Lafayette House Hotel,
the most intact boarding
house in Old Town, is listed
in the National Register of
Historic Places.
Photograph by Bob
McLaughlin.***



Early Lafayette offered a variety of simple diversions and past times. The Welsh men’s chorus performed concerts at the gazebo that located near 304 Baseline.³¹ The 1896 directory listed Jonathan Fisher as mining engineer and “leader of the brass and string bands.” People growing up in Layette in the early 1900s recall traveling by railroad and interurban streetcars into Boulder or Denver for shopping or entertainment. Local youngsters also enjoyed watched the volunteer fire department practice unrolling its hoses. (The team set a world record in competition in Boulder July 4, 1924.³²) The Jewel Theater at 301 E. Simpson offered movies for a dime. Winter past-times included sledding on city streets and ice skating on area ponds. Ice cream socials on the front porch of City Hall were a tradition into the 1950s.³³ Recreation included athletic events — basketball games, baseball games, and wrestling and boxing matches. Dances and other social events took place in the upper story lodge halls or in the Miners’ Union Hall, later called the Miners’ Opera House, at 211 Simpson.

The Congregational Church that Mary Miller helped build anchors the west end of the Simpson Street business district. The vernacular building, distinguished by shingled gables and a sheltered porch-like entrance later housed the Christian Science Church, Lafayette Library, and, today, the Mary Miller Theater. Its role as a community theater reflects the local appreciation for the performing arts. The Miners Opera House, hosted local performers and travelling shows. Residents were entertained by chorus groups and small local bands.

The ethnic makeup of the town was chiefly British, reflecting the experienced coal miners from England, Ireland, Wales, and Scotland who came to work in the Lafayette mines. English families included the Simpsons, Coles, Cundalls, William Bell, and Abernathy brothers. Welsh included Rees, Reese, Davis, Davies, Williams, and Mathias families. Scotch included the Hutchisons and Fergusons; the Irish included the large Moons clan. Italian miners also resided in Lafayette, but they were outnumbered by British workers. Beth Hutchison speculates that, in contrast, Louisville has a large Italian population because a large and prominent family of Italian coal miners immigrated to that town. The Lafayette area mines also drew skilled miners eastern U. S. coal fields in Pennsylvania and Kentucky, and from other Colorado coal mining towns.



Lafayette City Hall

Photo courtesy Lafayette Historical Society

Old Town and the Simpson Street commercial district remained the heart of Lafayette until the 1970s.

Following World War II, a housing shortage prompted residential construction.³⁴ G. I. mortgages financed construction of residences for soldiers returning from the War. An example of this post-war construction are the houses at 204 - 210 E. Baseline built in the late 1940. In the 1950s indoor plumbing finally became a standard feature in Old Town. The City required home owners to install bathrooms to help fund a bond issue for new water and sewer system. In many cases the facilities were added at the rear of several houses. Sometimes, the alley outhouse was simply moved to the rear of the house, attached, and outfitted with plumbing. During the 1960s, the commercial activity began shifting from Simpson Street to Baseline Road. Old Town declined further with the exodus of the post office in the 1970s and City Hall in 1985 to new facilities on Public Road.

The low cost of residential real estate in Old Town accounted for its remaining a neighborhood of retired coal miners. It also became the home of Hispanic residents with roots as agricultural workers immigrating from Mexico. The Sister Carmen Center opened in 1976 to assist this disadvantaged population. It was established by Sister Carmen Ptacnik, a member of Daughters of Charity and a Mexican native fluent in Spanish. She arrived in Lafayette in 1970, and through the Immaculate Conception parish set up the center that still operates at 305 – 307 Simpson. The Senior Center and the Boulder County Social Services, both on Simpson Street, reflect these demographics. The relatively low price of real estate in Old Town today has made its dwellings attractive as starter homes for young families.

The area surrounding Old Town, meanwhile, was growing. From the 1960s on, housing developments sprang up around the city, many annexed to the city. Lafayette became a “bedroom community” with most residents employed at Rocky Flats, the I.B.M plant in Niwot, or in Boulder or Denver. Lafayette celebrated its centennial in 1989 with population of around 15,000. Since then, development has continued, with acreage continuing to be converted from farm and ranchland to residential neighborhoods.



Commerce (1889 – 1970s)

The Simpson Street business district chiefly served the Lafayette coal miners and the farmers and ranchers from the surrounding area. The Rocky Mountain Store, also called the Miners Association Store, was owned by the Rocky Mountain Fuel Company. It sold groceries, dry goods, and mining supplies to the workers, often at inflated prices. It also extended credit to out-of-work miners during the summer. The Miners Union Store operated at 403 E. Simpson. Independent merchandising businesses included the Noble Mercantile Company and the General Mercantile. The latter also sold farm implements as well as groceries and dry goods. Various groceries, meat markets, and bakeries also operated on Simpson Street and Public Road. Among the most prominent were Bermont and Zook grocery stores, Moon's Meat Market, Lafayette Bank, and Alderson's "Hub" department store. Blacksmiths made and repaired mining tools. Livery stables served the traveling public until the 1950s.³⁵ Ranches raised mules for use underground in the mines, and supplied beef to feed the working men.

Among the goods and services provided to miners were living accommodations. Boarding and rooming houses operated throughout Old Town. The first was Elizabeth Moon's boarding house at 211 E. Cleveland, the third oldest building in town, moved from Louisville by her husband Walter Moon in 1889. Others included the Parks/Bradley, Diers House, Lafayette Hotel, Cundall House, Cleveland House, Central House, McClane Hotel, and Meyhoffer boarding houses, all run by women. "People could take in miners as boarders, which was a very popular thing to be doing here in Lafayette," explained Lucile Harrison, whose family ran the Cundall house for several decades. "There were miners coming in from foreign counties who needed places to stay, and there were schoolteachers. So there was a demand for boarding houses."³⁶

***Diers Boarding House
at 511 E. Cleveland
was one of Old Town's
numerous boarding
houses.***



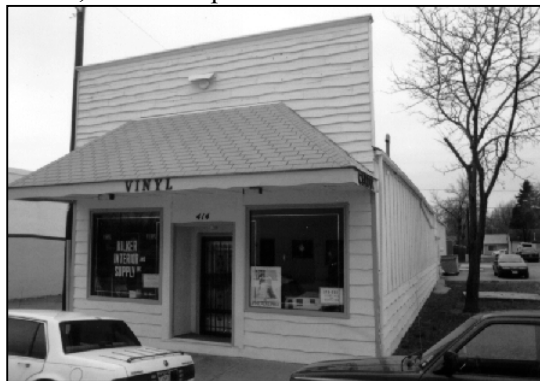
Lafayette enjoyed a robust economy between 1889 and 1910, thanks to the thriving coal mining industry. Although the commercial district burned to the ground in January, 1900, it was quickly reconstructed. This period of mild prosperity ended with the 1910 – 1914 Long Strike. Subsequent strikes, the Great Depression, and the close of the coal mining industry locally extinguished economic expansion in Old Town.

In the mid-1900s, business directories show that an increasing proportion of businesses were automobile-related. Filling stations, auto garages, and the McGlathery-Thompson auto tourist camp listed in the 1930s directories illustrate how the commercial center was gradually shifting from Simpson Street to Public Road/Highway 287. Gardens were maintained by the Lafayette Women's club, to provide welcoming atmosphere for travelers and visitors. Like many other mid-American towns, Lafayette succumbed to "boosterism." In a small plain pamphlet, it touted itself as a small city with a big future: "comfortable, friendly small-town living and all the advantages of a large, metropolitan city only 25 minutes away. Growing and full of opportunity, Lafayette is a place to build a future." Joe Distel and other local merchants organized a weekly raffle. The event attracted as many as 300 people from surrounding area to take their chances on appliances, grocery packages, and other prizes given away on the steps of City Hall.³⁷

In 1999, the historic Simpson Street commercial district is a shadow of its former self. Mayhoffer's boarding house at 411 E. Simpson burned down and is now an empty lot. A 1970s duplex replaced the business block at 501 E. Simpson which hosted Masons in an upstairs lodge hall. Fire consumed several buildings in the 400 – 420 block: the Bank of Lafayette at 402 E. Simpson burned down long ago; the Rocky Mountain Store façade was rebuilt in the 1970s after extensive fire damage. The two-story brick Bermont Block, reduced in latter years to one-story Joe's Grocery, stands empty at 310 Simpson. A victim of mine subsidence from the underground activity, it awaits demolition and eventual replacement.

Presently, occupants of the Simpson Street commercial district are chiefly associated with social services, such as the Boulder County Social Services, Sister Carmen Center, and Lafayette Senior Center. Doctors offices and a day care center accommodates neighborhood residents. The Sundown Condominium Complex and few residences intermingle with commercial entities such as a photography studio, a laundromat and Blue Mountain Plumbing. The storefront at 418 - 424 Simpson was recently remodeled, and new tenants include a beauty salon and dance studio. A small woodframe church at 305 E. Simpson occupies the site of the former Miners Union Store.

Old Town is still a walking town. Residents go on foot to plays at the Mary Miller Theater, to events at the Senior Center, and to shops on Public Road. Several buildings are unused or under-used, however many downtown structures retain the simple form, modest scale, and architectural elements of an early 1900s coal mining town. Architecturally significant are the one-story woodframe, false front buildings at 401, 403, 208, 304, and 414 Simpson. These vernacular storefronts characterize Lafayette's decades-long role as a supply town for the surrounding ranches and coal mines.



Research Design

The 1999 Survey of Old Town Lafayette was begun with the hope that the survey area could possibly be an historic district. However, less than 40% of the sites met architectural or historical criteria, as well as remaining unaltered. A district must possess at least 50% contributing structures. Old Town featured small vernacular cottages and wooden false-front buildings, interspersed with in-fill from the 1940s through the 1970s. The Simpson Street commercial district appeared minimally occupied with several vacant or under-used buildings, and a number of empty lots. Survey findings, described in the **Final Conclusions** section of this report, supported these initial observations.

Survey Methodology

The 1999 Survey of Old Town Lafayette consisted of both a reconnaissance and intensive investigation. It began with an examination of the 210 buildings and dwellings in the survey area. Each site was photographed and documented by gathering architectural data in the field, such as roof shape, building plan, exterior materials, window types, and architectural features. The Boulder County Assessor's office provided ownership data, construction date, and square footage for each site in both a computer text file and print out. Preliminary historical information was also gathered. This information was entered into a Microsoft Access database and organized by site address.

Further evaluation focused only on sites older than fifty years that were relatively unaltered. This evaluation determined whether the site retained historic character-defining features — height, scale, roof shape, exterior materials, and architectural features such as windows, porches, and decorative elements. To conclude the reconnaissance survey, an interim Survey Report was delivered to the City of Lafayette and Colorado Historical Society. The Report listed the 210 sites and recommended 56 sites for the intensive survey. These sites retained sufficient architectural integrity for potential landmarking. They were eligible under one or more of the following:

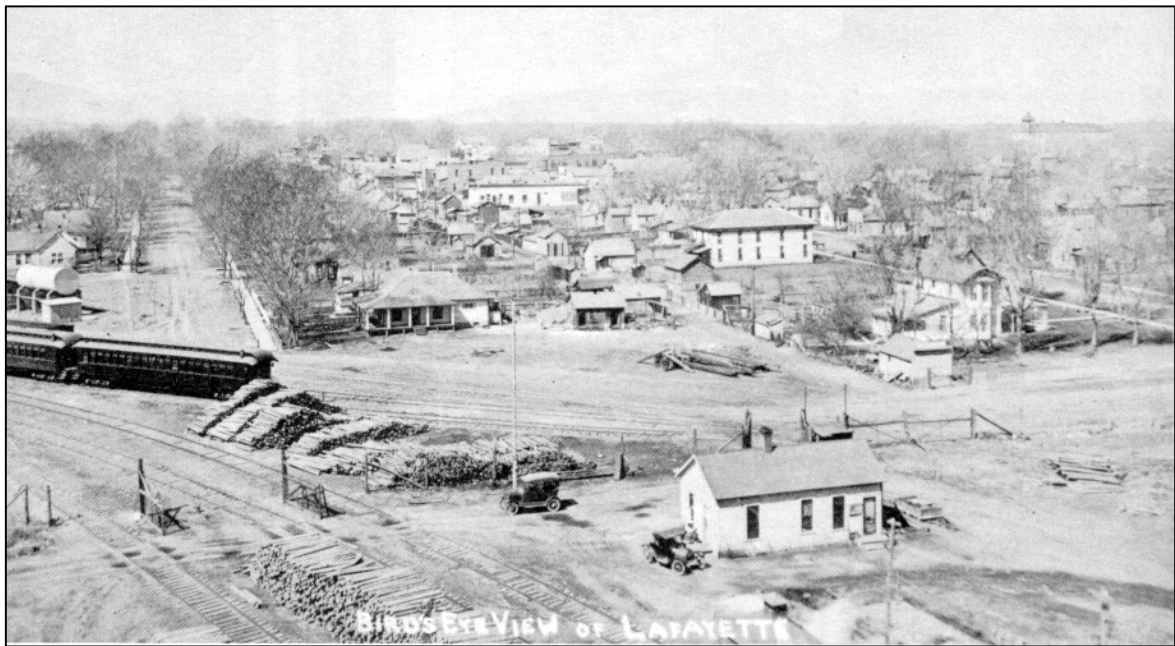
- Criteria A, association with historical event, the Boulder County coal mining and labor union activity
- Criteria B, association with influential local individuals
- Criteria C, their vernacular design as mining residences.

The sites were further documented by a Historic Architectural Survey Form (site form) prepared according to the requirements of the Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation at the Colorado Historical Society.

The intensive survey focused on 56 sites, but data from the 1926 directories and Anne Cramer's 1980 survey was entered for all 220 reconnaissance sites. Data gathering began with gathering historic information from sources such as: the 1980 survey; 1926 directory (the only one with street addresses); 1900, 1908, 1937, and 1946 Sanborn fire insurance maps; newspaper articles; historic photographs books; and oral interviews. The project drew upon information gathered during the Living History Workshop sponsored by the HPB in May 1998. This historical data aided identification of sites potentially eligible for the local, State and/or National Register based on historical significance. It also will aid the Lafayette HPB in determining altered sites that are eligible as local landmarks solely on their historic merit.

An architectural description was written for each intensive site and validated in the field. Each intensive site was photographed again to document various elevations and/or architectural details. A footprint for each was scanned from the 1936 Sanborn map, validated in the field, and updated to reflect alterations and additions. Additional site information, such as the UTM, construction history, and Statement of Significance, were prepared and entered. These data records were organized in a Microsoft Access database and printed on a site form meeting CHS survey requirements. Photographs were labeled and attached to each form. Survey forms were delivered to both the CHS and City of Lafayette. The project database was also provided to the City.

Survey materials included the Survey Report, Survey Map, Survey Database, photograph negatives, and oral history tapes and transcripts. The negatives will be stored in the archive room at the Lafayette Public Library. Survey Reports are being distributed to the Lafayette HPB, Lafayette Historical Society, and Lafayette Public Library. It is recommended that the report also be provided to the Boulder Carnegie Library, Denver Public Library Western History Collection, and the Stephen Hart Library at the Colorado Historical Society, where research was done for this project.



*Bird's Eye View of Lafayette taken in late 1920s or early 1930s.
Noble-Angevine residence (610 E. Simpson) right foreground,
Lafayette House behind it. Noble residence at 607 E. Cleveland left
foreground. Photo courtesy Lafayette Historical Society.*

Survey Results

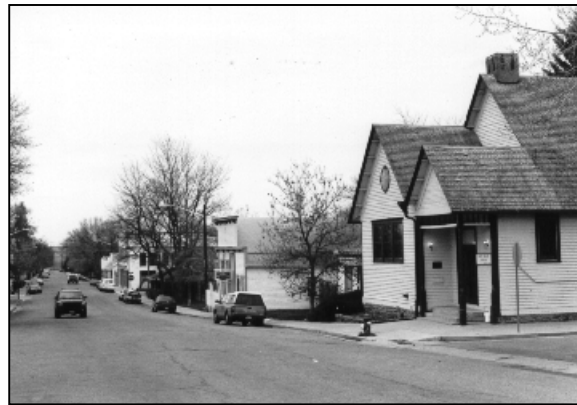
The results of the 1999 Old Town survey followed original expectations. This section describes early development patterns, describes Old Town architecture, and provides survey conclusions.

Old Town Lafayette Development Patterns

Much of the Old Town neighborhood still conveys the historic character and modest economic means of its early residents. The Simpson Street commercial district is a quiet street with service-oriented businesses and several non-profit entities. Most commercial buildings are one-story, with several historic woodframe false-fronts. Wide shady streets have simple houses on ample lots, many with flower beds and greenery. Many are less than 1000 square feet — small historic miner's dwelling expanded by a wing or various rear additions. Larger vernacular residences, 1000 – 1800 square feet, were usually owned by merchants or operated as boarding or rooming houses. All are of wood, with simple architectural features.

Lafayette developed within the original plat in its first decade, then expanded west of Public Road after 1900. The town had no log cabin settlement phase — its first structures were the William Simpson residence dwelling and a boarding house, both moved from Louisville. The 1889 arrival of the railroad both boosted local coal mining and made building materials easily available. The town's "boom" period lasted from 1899 to the 1910 start of the Long Strike, propelled by the coal demand from two local power plants built in 1902 and 1906. Most dwellings were built during this period, according to Boulder County Assessor's records and Sanborn fire insurance maps.³⁸

The 1900 Sanborn map shows woodframe dwellings, both large and small, intermingled with shacks, stables, and "house tents." The 100 blocks of Geneseo, Simpson, and Cleveland were undeveloped. The 1908 map shows denser construction, although undeveloped lots still dot Old Town. It also shows construction on Public Road was mainly on the west side, and chiefly taverns, saloons, and restaurants. Real estate records indicate that Mrs. Miller bought and sold real estate during the first decade of the town. The Mountain View subdivision west of Public Road was developed by Mary Miller around 1907, with the help of McAllister, who ran the local lumber yard and promoted land sales.³⁹



Mary Miller's Congregational Church still anchors the west end of the Simpson Street commercial district.

Photo by Cathleen Norman

From 1910 to 1920, the Long Strike and World War I curbed growth. During these lean years, the only new houses were miners' cottages purchased and moved into town as coal mine camps shut down, a practice that apparently continued into the 1940s. For example, the dwellings at 106 and 108 East Simpson came from the Gladstone Mine around 1910. Construction resumed in the 1920s, with bungalows and Tudor style houses popular

nationwide during that decade. The Depression and World War II halted construction from the late 1930s to 1945, followed by the post-war prosperity enjoyed both locally and nationally.

Beginning in the 1920s, the automobile spurred construction of filling stations, garages, and auto courts along Public Road/Highway 287.⁴⁰ Gradually, Lafayette's economy shifted from coal mining to a bedroom community, and as mining operations closed and automobile commuting became affordable for the average worker. Today, many Lafayette residents work at Boulder County manufacturing and high-technology facilities and in Boulder and Denver offices. Old Town's remaining vacant lots were developed with ranch houses and duplexes in the 1960s – 1990s. The Boise Cascade plant that opened in 1972 provided some 1,000 jobs, spurred the local economy, and contributed to in-fill, such as the east addition to the former Lafayette City Hall at 201 – 203 E. Simpson.

Mary Miller platted the town with an east-west orientation and major thoroughfares terminating at the Simpson coal mine on the east edge. The nearly-flat terrain and ample acreage allowed development of sizable, 50' x 140' lots. Mary Miller reserved corner lots for City Hall and the Congregational Church. Lafayette School was built northeast of the intersection of Public and Baseline Roads, on land donated by the Union Pacific railroad. It seems odd that Mrs. Miller did not include a public park in her 1889 town plat. A city park, however, was soon developed northwest of Old Town, between Lafayette School and the cemetery. The park has since been replaced by the Bob Berger Recreation Center. Some residents view the absence of a public park in Old Town as a significant drawback.

A distinctive neighborhood characteristic is the corner house. A number of corner sites are on double lots, and often occupied by the larger dwelling of merchant or mine official. Corner houses include Mary Miller's home at 409 E. Cleveland, her son Thomas' residence at 501 E. Cleveland, Allen-Henning residence/mortuary at 609 E. Simpson, Noble-Angevine residence at 610 E. Simpson, the Davis-Kettle residence at 210 E. Simpson, and dwelling at 609 E. Geneseo. The historic City Hall, Congregational Church, and Methodist Church all occupied corner lots. Some corner lots have been sub-developed with second houses, such as the dwelling built in 1964 at 211 E. Cleveland, next to the Kulgren-Cundall Residence at 209 E. Cleveland.

Neighborhood landscaping began with shade trees planted throughout town at the behest of Mrs. Miller. As in so many other Colorado towns, Lafayette residents re-created the shady spaces experienced in mature eastern and mid-western communities. Many properties have street trees and yard trees. Lawns and flower gardens are common now, but in earlier years yards were cultivated with large vegetable gardens on their



The Moon Boarding House – the second building in the town, is on a corner lot at 211 E. Cleveland. Its historical significance may warrant HPB support of its restoration. Photo courtesy Lafayette historical Society.

roomy lots to help sustain miners' families during seasonal summer unemployment.⁴¹ Landscaping features include several sidewalks and walkways of red sandstone quarried at nearby Lyons, Colorado. Historic iron fences remain in front of some of the neighborhood's oldest houses.

Despite an award-winning Fire Department, Lafayette lost several historic sites to flames. The largest conflagration was in 1900 when the entire commercial district burnt down, to be replaced by similar woodframe false-front buildings and a few brick "blocks." In 1932, five businesses burned on Simpson Street: Ross Grocery, Lafayette Billiards Hall, Jensen's Barber Shop, the Hub Store, and Hubbards Dry Goods.⁴² The Hub and Hubbards Dry Goods were rebuilt. A historic general store with a lodge hall above was located at 400 E. Simpson; it burned and was replaced by a ranch-style duplex. The site once occupied by Mrs. Mayhoffer's Boarding House at 411 E. Simpson still stands vacant. Several historic buildings were altered significantly following fire damage by, such as the Rocky Mountain Fuel Co. at 304 – 310 E. Simpson, and the original Methodist church at 211 E. Geneseo, now a private residence. The City built a new Fire Department of brick at 200 – 204 E. Geneseo in the 1970s.

The Simpson Mine continued as a dominant force for nearly 40 years. It employed hundreds of people who built and owned houses in Old Town. The Simpson and other nearby mines also supported the local businesses patronized by mine workers and mining companies. The Simpson, however, curbed growth east of Foote Street until the mine plant was dismantled in the 1930s and 1940s, and the site developed as a neighborhood. The railroad too hampered development. The Colorado & Southern tracks angled across the southeast corner of Old Town until the railroad vacated the right-of-way in the 1930s. The depot was moved to a residential lot at 604 E. Simpson, and the C&S property developed with 1960s ranch houses, the 1970s Sherwood Village subdivision, and a mobile home neighborhood. Today the Simpson and east Lafayette coal mines are cultivated by alfalfa fields. Most of them, however, face eventual development as housing subdivisions.

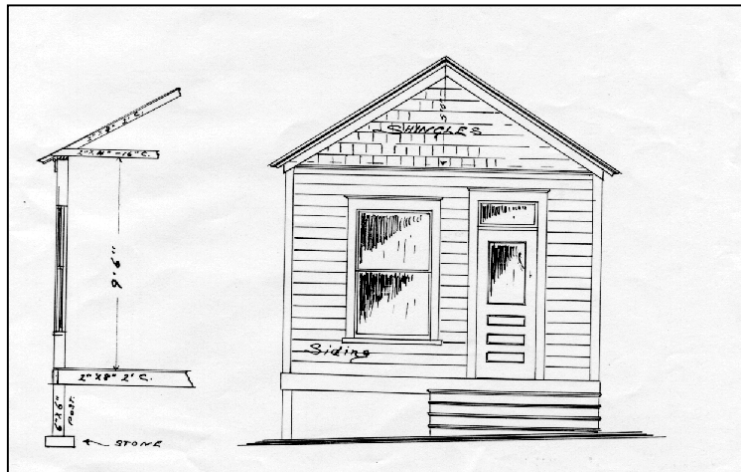
Old Town Lafayette Architectural Character

The small, plain, wooden buildings and dwellings of Lafayette reflect the town's working class economy and residents. Most commercial buildings were woodframe with false-fronts. These were occasionally clad in stamped-metal patterned with a brick design or small stone block, such as the now-altered historic City Hall and burnt-down Lafayette Bank at 402 E. Simpson. The two remaining brick commercial buildings have been altered by application of stucco 405 – 407 E. Simpson and synthetic siding 400 – 406 E. Simpson.

Storefronts and houses were constructed by local builders and carpenters, probably working from pattern books or purchased plans. It is possible that the Simpson brothers, William, James, John, and Joseph, were early builders too, having constructed the first structure in Louisville and moved the first dwelling to Lafayette. The 1890s Lafayette directories listed carpenters H. Weaver, M. B. Weaver, Jay W. Wood, William E. Van Etten, J. M. Van Deren and the Zook brothers, mason Fred Neizerd, and carpenter and builder Jacob Snyder. The 1907 Lafayette Business Directory advertised Pierce-Cunningham Co. builders and contractors. A. O. Spaulding, contractor and builder, and McAllister, owner of the local lumberyard were local builders. McAllister assisted Mary Miller in developing the Mountain View subdivision around 1907.⁴³ Clarence Waneka also recalled the Fischer brothers, Louisville carpenters who built the porch and addition on the Waneka Farm on South Boulder Road, were active in both towns.

Old Town's historic housing stock is predominantly vernacular. Earliest residences include three types: 1) small miners' dwellings with front-gabled, gabled-L or hipped roofs; 2) larger vernacular residences of merchants or mine managers; and 3) boarding houses. The small size and inexpensive materials of the miners' dwellings made them affordable to miners whose meager salaries were further reduced by labor strikes and seasonal work stoppages. Some miners' dwellings were gabled, 14' x 32' structures, often enlarged by wings and additions.

This 1899 architectural drawing for a 14' X 32' miner's cottage in the gold mining town of Victor, Colo. resembles the dimension of several cottages in Old Town.



Others were hipped box dwellings — a four-room, 20'-by-20' dwelling with a triangular hipped roof — was built in mining towns or industrial centers across the state as cheap worker housing. The small vernacular dwellings were apparently taken from building manuals. Pattern books proliferated in the U. S. from the mid-1800s on, but featured elaborate, fashionable residences for the middle and upper classes. Kit homes sold through mail order catalogues were available through the 1910s and 1920s.

The six-room Hood family house at the Hoods corners intersection of Public Road and South Boulder Road was a larger version of the hipped box. A. O. Spaulding provided an architectural specification for a 28' x 40' built with hipped roof, porch with turned columns and balusters, ten-foot ceilings, 30" x 40" front window, bay window, dormer, and pantry. Spaulding charged \$979 for building the house and a 14' X 24' barn — materials were an additional cost.⁴⁴ The hipped box emerged in the early 1900s as the brick-built "Classic Cottage" in urban neighborhoods, such as Denver's Capitol Hill, so-called because of its symmetrical design and the classic columns used in the ubiquitous front porch.

Simpson Street merchants had larger residences nearby on Cleveland and Geneseo Streets near downtown — typically 1,000 square feet or more in size, with architectural elements such as shingled gable ends, gable-end ornaments, and porches with decorative woodworking. Supposedly, nearly every historic two-story residence in Old Town served as a boarding house at one time or another.⁴⁵ Old Town's numerous boarding houses provided affordable lodging to coal miners, school teachers, and other itinerant workers or travelers.



Outbuildings and alley structures were typical — outhouses, coal sheds, stables, garages, and sheds placed at the rear of the lot. Most boarding houses had a wash house at the rear, such as those still remaining at 601 E. Simpson and 209 E. Cleveland.⁴⁶ Sometimes, a secondary dwelling was built behind a first structure. Other residences had associated businesses, such as the small, false-fronted building at 511 E. Geneseo that housed a wallpaper shop for many years. In the 1920s and 1930s, houses were built with matching garages built at the rear of the lot and accessed from a driveway leading from the street.

Outbuildings such as this are reminders of Old Town's past and should be preserved.



Architectural ornamentation was modest. Many miners' and merchants' dwellings have small front porches supported by turned wooden posts. A few possess banisters, railings, or decorative brackets. Some original wooden posts have been replaced by wrought iron supports. Vernacular merchant's homes had bay windows, Palladian windows, window lintel molding, decorative shingles, dormers, and gable end treatments. Local resident Lloyd Martinez was involved in producing ornamental iron work; it is possible that he made those from 1945 on.⁴⁷ Foundations were typically concrete, red sandstone, or entirely lacking. Boarding houses often had features to accommodate multiple dwellers: common parlors, several exterior doors, second story porches, two-person outhouses, and wash houses at the alley.

Several houses have large windows with multi-color upper panes



The 1999 survey of Old Town discovered several architectural features distinctive to the neighborhood. Numerous dwellings have a large front window with a small horizontal pane on top and large square pane on the bottom. Some of these windows have a multi-colored upper panes – a central lite with a border of smaller square panes of colored glass, such as those seen on the William Moon Residence at 302 E. Simpson. Other houses have a small, square bay window at the rear, such as the Miners Museum at 108 E. Simpson.

A window placed on an exterior front corner appears to have been the trademark of one local builder. This corner window appears in 409 Cleveland, the 400 – 410 block of E. Cleveland, 210 E. Simpson, 608 E. Geneseo, and 609 E. Geneseo. Triangular pediments were used on several dwellings, such as 609 E. Geneseo. Residences at 608 E. Geneseo, 310 E. Cleveland and 310.5 E. Cleveland have notably elaborate woodworking. They also employ a narrow strip wooden siding, apparently a specially-lathed wood applied by the original builder.

The national prosperity of the 1920s was manifested locally in two domestic styles — Tudor and Bungalow. The local Tudor style is characterized by one-story height, masonry exterior, steeply-pointed vestibule, and central chimney. Locally, the Bungalow style is typified by one-story height, a wooden clapboard or stucco exterior, gently-sloping roof gable, front-gabled half-wall porch, and exposed wooden eaves, either pointed end or carved. The best examples in Old town are 109 and 201 E. Geneseo.

Several Bungalows such as this were built in Lafayette in the 1920s and early 1930s.
Photograph by Bob McLaughlin.

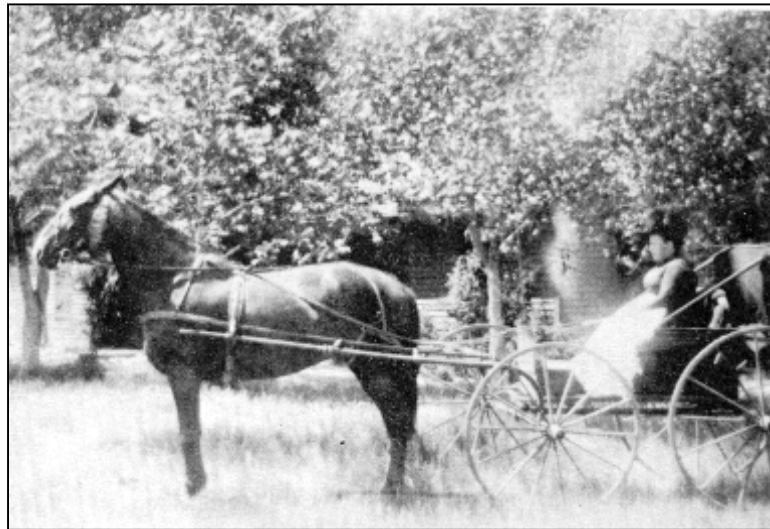


The Great Depression and World War II limited local construction from 1930 to 1945. After the war, residential construction accommodated returning service men. G.I. mortgages funded small, rectangular houses typically clad in square- or wavy-edged asbestos shingles. Some have a gabled-L roof configuration or a triangular pediment over the entrance. Windows are metal-framed and multi-paned with ornamental shutters. Some south- and west-facing windows have fixed window awnings, many of corrugated fiberglass. After the war, the television focused family life inside the house rather than on the front porch, and porches shrank. Some became merely a hood over the porch or a stoop cover. Rather than wooden posts porch supports were of wrought iron.

Old Town lots, either long-time vacant or site of earlier historic structures, were developed during the 1960s - 1980s. In the 1960s, a speculative builder erected small ranch houses at 504, 506, 602, and 604 Cleveland. In 1972, thirty FHA low-income

dwellings were built in the Sherwood subdivision in southeast Lafayette: 1,000 square feet houses for \$19,000 - \$20,000. During the 1970s, some lots were filled with manufactured ranch-style homes from the local Boise-Cascade plant. Ranch homes, bi-levels, and duplexes in varying styles and degrees of compatibility filled several empty lots in Old Town. The 1960s ranch houses near Geneseo and Foote could become “future landmarks,” if they remain unaltered.

Since the 1960s, growth has occurred around the perimeter of town. Economic stagnation has left Old Town relatively unchanged. Its mature vegetation, pedestrian orientation, and low traffic volume provide a quiet neighborhood environment favored by young families, retirees, and long-time Lafayette residents. Escalating housing prices in Boulder County make Old Town an affordable “starter home” housing market. This rediscovery of Old Town has effected several historic dwellings. Home owners have enlarged some smaller properties, with rear additions of varying compatibility. A number of homes have been restored to their original appearance. Not all new residents appreciate the small scale and simple design of Old Town dwelling, however. The neighborhood’s historic character could be lost through unsympathetic alterations and in-fill (new construction). Small houses on large lots are especially vulnerable to extensive expansion or even “scrape-off”: demolition and replacement by a large, modern residence.



*Town founder Mary Miller on her ranch.
Photo courtesy Lafayette Historical Society.*

Final Conclusions

The Survey identified 56 sites as potentially eligible for local landmark designation and/or listing in the State and/or National Registers. These potential landmarks are scattered throughout Old Town. Non-historic infill and altered historic structures prevent designation of a cohesive historic district. The local preservation ordinance being developed by the City would allow these sites to be listed as individual local landmarks based upon their architectural character, historic significance, and integrity.

Nearly 30% of the sites in the survey area were found to retain sufficient architectural integrity to be potentially eligible for landmarking. Several met Criteria A, for their association with the coal mining industry that contributed to development of the Boulder County; Criteria B for their association with individuals who were influential in early Lafayette or in the labor movement; or Criteria C, in particular, the hipped boxes and front-gabled miners' cottages that represent the vernacular design of the turn-of-the-century working class residence. Other sites are also excellent examples of bungalow or Tudor styles.



Hipped roof dwellings in Lafayette, moved from the Simpson Camp, are the only physical reminders of the coal mining activity that shaped the young city.

Photo courtesy Lafayette Historical Society.

Among the sites identified as potentially eligible for the National and/or State Register were the best examples of several vernacular building types, such as front-gabled cottage, side-gabled cottage, and hipped box. Sites were identified for that **local** historical significance. There was difficulty in identifying Lafayette's best historic examples of architectural styles and building types, because this survey concentrated on Old Town, rather than the entire city.

Potential local historic districts were identified as follows:

- **109, 201, 207, and 209 E. Geneseo** (205 Geneseo noncontributing)
- **511, 601, 605, 609, 608, and 610 E. Geneseo** (607 Geneseo noncontributing)
- **206, 208, 208A, 210, 300, 302 and 304 E. Simpson** (300 E. Simpson already on National Register)
- **609 and 610 E. Simpson**, if combined with mine-related landmarks in 700 block of E. Simpson.
- **300, 302, 308, 310, and 310.5 E. Cleveland** (304 and 306 E. Cleveland noncontributing)
- **603, 605, and 607 E. Cleveland** - Need to substantiate that all three were moved from the Simpson Camp.

Unfortunately, many buildings and houses have been altered so that they no longer look historic. This loss of architectural integrity ranges from minimal to drastic. Less extreme changes — synthetic siding, wrought iron porch supports, or removed porches — are potentially reversible. The Reconnaissance Survey identified these “restorable” sites with less significant alterations. Other alterations are irreversible: altered window shapes, drastically altered porches, and large, new additions.

Altered sites that could be considered for local landmarking based on historical significance include:

- City Hall at 201 E. Simpson
- former Methodist Church at 211 E. Geneseo (now a private residence)
- the O’Day boarding house at 311 E. Geneseo
- William Simpson residence at 303 E. Simpson
- Elizabeth Moon boarding house at 211 E. Cleveland
- Hannah Dier boarding house at 511 E. Cleveland

Appendix A lists sites previously recorded with the Colorado Historical Society. Six Old Town sites have been placed on the National Register of Historic Places, nominated in 1983 by the Lafayette Historical Society for their association with the Lafayette Coal Mining Era:

- Lewis House (108 East Simpson)
- Miller Library Theater (300 East Simpson)
- Lafayette House boarding house (600 East Simpson)
- Mary Miller House (409 East Cleveland)
- Rose Terraces (205 – 207 East Cleveland)
- Kullgren-Cundall House (209 East Cleveland).

Also a number of historic farms in rural Lafayette are listed individually in the State or National Register.

Several Old Town sites were recorded in the 1980s during the Boulder County Rental Rehabilitation and the Louisville-Lafayette Revitalization programs. Some were identified as contributing to a Lafayette Historic District, which was never formally developed. The 1999 Survey found that a Lafayette Historic District was not feasible, because over 60% of Old Town sites surveyed were newer dwellings/buildings or unsympathetically altered historic sites.

State or National Register listing of sites possibly could be accomplished through one of several ways. A Multiple Property or Thematic National Register Nomination could include specific building types, such as dwellings moved from the mining camps or hipped box house types. Extensive historical research may be necessary to identify dwellings moved from the mining camps, however. Dwellings clustered around the Foote and Simpson intersection possibly could be nominated as a small district for their association with the Simpson Mine. Several, if not most, dwellings were occupied by mine foreman or superintendents. However, dwellings east of Foote were outside the area for the 1999 survey. Lastly, if the residence of Edward Doyle could be located and is still intact, it could be nominated for its significance in Doyle’s role in the Long Strike. Perhaps using the Edward Lawrence Doyle papers, (1890 – 1943) at the Denver Public Library, Western History Collection would yield his Lafayette residence during the strike.

Present Day Challenges

No longer a coal mining town, Lafayette is seeking a revived economy and refreshed identity. Retail activity in historic downtown is sparse as suburban dwellers patronize the shopping centers on the city's edges. The recent Highway 287 bypass has reduced pass-through traffic on Public Road, but local residents and passersby support a string of antique stores, gift shops, and boutiques along that thoroughfare.

Several current efforts are capitalizing on a renewed interest in Lafayette's heritage. The Historic Preservation Board, founded in 1997, coordinated a Living History Symposium in May 1998 and sponsored this 1999 Old Town Lafayette architectural survey. The Lafayette Historical Society is an advocate for history and preservation, operating the Lewis House Museum and giving tours to schoolchildren and other groups. The Lafayette Library maintains a local history archive and sponsors cultural workshops and programs. The Library also highlights Lafayette's coal mining history with a large tile mural on the library's south façade illustrating Mary and Lafayette Miller, coal miners, and a coal tippie. The Healthy Communities project in May 1999 developed a walking tour brochure and placed interpretive plaques on some 30 historically-significant Old Town sites.



The large turnout for two walking tours in May indicates that Lafayette residents are interested in Old Town heritage.

Photo courtesy Beth and Jim Hutchison.

Revitalizing Old Town, and Simpson Street in particular, has become a priority for the City. To encourage preservation the city is developing a local preservation ordinance using data and criteria provided by this survey. The HPB plans to begin a local landmarking program in late 1999 or early 2000. The City has created an urban renewal district to revitalize Public Road and is carrying out a Public Road improvement project including street repairs, burying street lights, installing fiber optic cable, and landscaping. The City hopes to take the same approach with Simpson Street. The HPB is considering developing design guidelines or standards to influence new construction in Lafayette's historic areas.

Simpson Street's deteriorating structures, under-used buildings, and empty lots provide ample development opportunity. Old Town's the present R2 zoning contributes to its role as an enclave for rental housing and multiple dwellings, and readily allows duplexes. To remain compatible with the existing historic neighborhood, builders need to reflect the traditional one- to two-story height and the residential set-back (approximately 20 feet).

To retain the historic character of Old Town, however, new construction must reflect the neighborhood's traditional small scale, pedestrian orientation, simple architectural features, and building materials. If poorly-designed, a new building could overwhelm or even obliterate Old Town's simple charm. Ideally, the City should

consider implementing a height restriction, as well as other guidelines for rehabilitation and new construction. For example: to blend in with the historical buildings, new commercial construction in Old Town should employ the wooden clapboard or red brick traditionally used in the Simpson Street district. Publishing design guidelines would help encourage sympathetic treatment of these historic woodframe false-front buildings and vernacular dwellings.

New construction can also draw on architectural features of historic buildings that no longer exist. There were few large brick commercial buildings in historic Lafayette. The three that remain have been altered significantly: Boulder County Social Services, Sunset Condominiums, and the old Bermont Building. Photographs of historic Lafayette buildings are available at the Lewis House Museum. Another alternative is reconstructing new versions of historic buildings, carefully following historic photographs as design documentation. For example, the dilapidated and unrecognizable Bermont Building at 400 Simpson could be replaced by a building similar to and incorporating architectural features from the original structure. With any new construction, however, it is important to avoid creating “fake history” by using styles, materials, and features never seen in historic Lafayette.



Historic Bermont Building
photo courtesy Lafayette Historical Society.

Today, city leaders are faced with reviving Lafayette’s civic identity. Many residents have little knowledge of the city’s origins. Rediscovering and sharing Lafayette’s heritage of agriculture, mining, and railroading can serve as a link between the past and the future. The two walking tours of Old Town during Historic Preservation Week in May 1999 were well attended, indicating an interest in this history. Appreciating the city’s history can also provide a remedy to modern, high-tech lifestyles and the specter of urban sprawl. Sprucing up and marketing Old Town’s unique character and charm, could make it again the historic heart of the city, vibrant with shoppers, visitors, festivals, and celebrations. The intersections of Public Road and Simpson, Cleveland, and Cannon could serve as gateways into the Simpson Street district. Cities such as Golden, Old Colorado City, Idaho Springs, and Manitou Springs serve as examples for Lafayette’s heritage-based revitalization.

Rejuvenating Old Town depends upon engaging the current residents — involving long-time citizens, as well informing and exciting new residents. Now lacking is a neighborhood association or similar civic organization to promote projects and increase public support. However, the visual impact of economic revitalization on the historic fabric of Old Town is an important consideration. As more affluent home owners move into the neighborhood, expansions and alterations are inevitable. The extent of changes in Old Town will be affected by the upcoming historic preservation ordinance, city policy, and the awareness and appreciation of local residents for the historic houses and buildings that are the last vestige of Lafayette’s coal mining past.

Recommendations

The work accomplished in the 1999 Survey can be expanded upon in several ways. The following is a list of suggestions for the City, the Historic Preservation Board, and/or the Lafayette Historical Society. Several projects possibly could be funded by State Historical Fund grants.

Landmark Designation

- Ask Suzanne Doggett at CHS to make a site visit to discuss conclusions of 1999 survey.
- Investigate Multiple Property or Thematic National Register Nomination to include: hipped box house types or dwellings moved from the mining camps. Or investigate expanding Thematic Nomination for the Lafayette Coal Era by adding vernacular coal miners' dwellings.
- Investigate Foote and Simpson intersection as potential district associated with Simpson Mine. Several, if not most, dwellings were occupied by mine foreman or superintendents. Dwellings east of Foote were outside the area for the 1999 survey.
- Notify, encourage, and/or assist owners of properties identified as landmark eligible by the 1999 Old Town Survey.
- Assist owners of properties eligible for the State or National Register to nominate their properties, perhaps through a public workshop.
- Survey and photo-document historic Simpson and Cannon mine sites.
- Conduct survey(s) of neighborhood bounded west of Lafayette, Emma and Cannon Streets in Old Town, north of Baseline.
- Develop Design Guidelines for Old Town and for landmarks and/or districts outside Old Town.
- Locate the Edward Doyle residence, perhaps using his papers at the Denver Public Library, Western History Collection (Edward Lawrence Doyle papers, 1890 – 1943).

Restoration/Preservation

- Initiate Preservation Honor Award program, possibly during Historic Preservation Week (early May).
- Encourage restoration by providing home owners with historic photograph of their house
- Publish an historic preservation newsletter focusing on Old Town and other historic Lafayette landmarks.
- Sponsor and promote a highly visible restoration project, perhaps a historic boarding house.
- Sponsor a neighborhood porch beautification or other multiple site restoration project.
- Target a block, such as the south side of the 300 block on Cleveland, with a concentration of eligible landmarks combined with restorable altered sites.
- Assist Clarence Waneka in preserving/relocating Waneka Farm properties.

Local History

- Sponsor a Living History symposium to acquire historical information on survey sites with few or no known names of historic owners/residents: 404 E. Baseline, 406 E. Baseline, 506 E. Baseline, 109 E. Geneseo, 206 E. Geneseo, 207 E. Geneseo, 209 E. Geneseo, 305 E. Geneseo, 605 E. Geneseo, 608 E. Geneseo, 609 E. Geneseo, and 610 E. Geneseo.
- Sponsor a Living History symposium identify builder of residences at 608 E. Geneseo, 611 E. Geneseo, 310 E. Simpson, 310 E. Cleveland, and 409 Cleveland (Mary Miller residence). These are the more prominent dwellings with the front “corner window” which appears to have been a stylistic feature of a local builder.
- Develop an Old Town house tour visiting interiors of historic residences. The owners of 608 Geneseo expressed an interest in participating.
- Where they are available, provide historic photographs from Lafayette historical for survey landmarks.
- Develop a walking tour publication, drawing from 1999 Survey of Old Town Lafayette.
- Sponsor a teacher-training program on local history and historic buildings and neighborhoods, using materials from the survey.
- Investigate the Mary Miller family papers and photographs. Develop local heritage event based on Mrs. Miller, perhaps during Women History Month (March).
- Data enter Lafayette directories, census records, and other historical records so that data can be sorted and analyzed for ethnicity, occupations, and other categories. Seek assistance from an high school intern for this.
- Investigate ethnic make-up of historic Lafayette. Categorize surnames by nationality, starting with directory and census names.
- Use Survey Report in educating local school teachers on Lafayette history.

Bibliography

- Abbott, Carl, Stephen J. Leonard, and David McComb. Colorado – A History of the Centennial State, Revised Edition. Niwot: Colorado Associated University Press, 1982.
- Beshoar, Barron B., Out of the Depths – The Story of John R. Lawson, a Labor Leader. Denver: The Colorado Labor Historical Committee of the Denver Trades & Labor Assembly, 1957 (3rd edition). First edition: 1947.
- Clift, Anne Eckert and Gordon M. Matheson. Boulder County Subsidence Investigation. Golden, Colorado: Dames & Moore, 1986.
- Connaroe, Carolyn. The Louisville Story. Louisville: Louisville Times, 1978.
- Hutchison, James D. Survey and Settlement. Lafayette: Morrell Graphics, 1994.
- Hutchison, James D. Treeless Plain to Thriving City – Lafayette Centennial, 1889 - 1989. Lafayette: Lafayette Historical Society, 1990.
- Long, Priscilla. Where the Sun Never Shines – A History of America's Bloody Coal Industry. New York: Paragon House, 1989.
- McFarlane, James. Coal Regions of America, Third Edition. New York: D. Appleton & Co., 1890. First edition, 1877.
- National Register Nomination for the Lafayette Coal Mining Era Thematic. Boulder: Community Collaborative Services, 1985.
- National Register of Historic Places, Lafayette Thematic Resource, Continuation Sheet: The Terrace.
- Mehls, Stephen J. and Carol. Routt and Moffatt Counties, Colorado - Coal Mining Historic Context. Lafayette: Western historical Studies, Inc., 1991.
- Sampson, JoAnne. Walking Through History on the Marshall Mesa. Boulder: City of Boulder Open Space Department, 1995.
- Smith, Phyllis. Once A Coal Miner – The Story of Colorado's Northern Coal Field. Boulder: Pruett Publishing, 1989.
- Turney, J. E. and L. Murray-Williams. Colorado Front Range Inactive Coal Mine Data and Subsidence Information – Boulder County. Denver: Colorado Geological survey, 1983.
- Rogers, William P. The Coal Primer. Van Buren, Arkansas: Valley Press, Inc., 1978.
- Ubbelohde, Maxine Benson, and Duane A. Smith. A Colorado History, Sixth Edition. Boulder: Pruett Publishing, 1988.

Oral Interviews

- Amicarella, Effie. June 24, 1999.
- Distel, Joe. June 24, 1999.
- Harrison, Lucille. June 8, 1999.
- Waneka, Clarence. June 8, 1999.
- Whipple, Iva. June 8, 1999.

Glossary

bargeboard	Projecting boards placed against the incline of the gable of a building and hiding the ends of the horizontal roof timbers; sometimes decorated.
bay window	Projecting, often three-sided window
board and batten siding	Consisting of vertical application of boards, trimmed by thin wood strips.
baluster/balustrade	Small, bulging, vase-shaped column. A series of these is called a balustrade and may form a porch railing.
Bungalow	Front-gabled home with low-slanting roof and similarly-roofed porch. May also have projecting eaves, battered porch columns, and open-gabled porch. Brick or wood. Prominent style between 1910 and 1925. Called Arts and Crafts style.
clapboard	A long thin board, thicker on one edge than the other, used in covering the outer walls of buildings; of or made of clapboard. Describe as either <i>narrow</i> or <i>wide</i> . Wide is often more recent and may be vinyl or aluminum.
classic column	A column with pronounced capital (top) and a base (bottom).
clerestory windows	Window panels above large storefront windows in commercial buildings.
clipped gable	A gable roof in which the upper portion is hipped, or inclined toward the ridgeline, forming a small triangle of roof surface. Also called a jerkinhead roof.
corbel, corbelling	Stepped arrangements of stones or bricks, with each course projecting beyond the one below. Seen at rooflines of flat-roofed buildings, especially commercial buildings.
cornerboards	Vertical wood strips applied to the corner of a structure.
corner window	Unique window type seen in historic dwellings in Lafayette. It is window place at a 90 degree angle on the exterior corner of a front façade.
course	Row of laid brick or stone.
cornice	Any prominent, projecting molded feature surmounting a wall, doorway, or other construction. Most often seen on commercial buildings.
cross gable	Multiple gables facing both front and sides.
cut-away porch	Porch that is located within the main section of the dwelling. Also called recessed or inset.
dentils	A series of closely spaced small rectangular blocks used at the cornice, especially in classical architecture. Often seen in brick Italianate commercial architecture.
dog tooth brick	Brick course laid with corner edge out, forming a pointed row.
dormer window	A small gabled or shed-roofed window projecting from a roof.
double-hung window	A window having two vertical sashes, each closing a different part of the

	opening.
Edwardian vernacular style	A post-Victorian style resembling Queen Anne but with fewer decorative details. Elements include gabled roofs, gable-end shingling, and a front porch.
facade	The front of a building, especially an imposing or decorative one. Most often used in reference to commercial buildings.
fanlight	A semicircular window with radiating glazing bars suggesting a fan. Often over a door.
false front	Woodframe commercial structure with a front gable orientation. Front façade has a square wooden top that makes front of building appear larger than it really is..
finial	A vertical ornament placed at the apex of an architectural feature, such as gable or turret.
fishscale shingling	Often seen in gable end, round-ended shingles.
Foursquare	Boxy, two-story house, hipped roof with dormer(s). Popular in early 1900s.
frieze	A decorative, often carved, band near the top of a wall; most often seen in commercial architecture. In Victor, some porches are decorated with a wood, spindle-work frieze.
friezeboard	Wood band applied directly under gable..
front gabled	Principle gable faces front of the property, toward the street.
gable	Roof with two sloping sides that meet at the top, forming a triangular shape.
gable end	End of roof under gable, used to describe things found under the roof gable, such as fishscale shingling in gable end or sunburst in gable end.
gabled L	L-shaped floor plan with a gable at each outside end.
gambrel roof	A four-sided gable, often associated with American barn. May be front-, side- or cross-gabled.
garlands	Draping foliage motif used on metal cornices on commercial buildings.
half-timbering	Linear, decorative woodworking applied over stucco to imitate English half-timbering, which consisted of wooden structural supports filled in.
Hipped-Roof Box	Small, square-shaped, one-story house with a pyramid-shaped roof. Some have a small gable or gabled section added to the front..
hipped roof	Pyramid shape, generally seen on hipped box or Foursquare house. Truncated hip.
keystone	Stone inserted in apex (top) of arch.
kickplate	Wooden panel found on lower exterior of commercial storefront, below windows.
lap siding	Siding composed of overlapping, horizontal strips, which may be wood, vinyl, or aluminum.

lintel	The upper horizontal terminate of doors and windows.
lite	Window pane, used to describe number and placement of panes in a window, such as 2/2 or 6/1.
oriel window	Window that projects from an upper story and is supported on some form of corbelling or bracketing. Similar to a bay window.
parapet	Low wall used at edge of roof.
pediment	A low triangular gable outlined by a horizontal cornice below and sloping cornices above; a feature resembling this, used to crown an opening, monument, etc. or as decoration (such as above a window).
pier	A square pillar.
pilaster	A shallow pier or rectangular column, projecting only slightly from a wall, and in classical architecture, conforming with one of the orders.
pedimented gable	Roof gable with indentations at lower corners.
plot plan	A sketch of a building's exterior walls. Also called a footprint.
pyramid roof	Pyramid-shaped hipped roof with steep slopes meeting in a single point.
quarried stone	Stone taken from a quarry, usually cut in squares.
Queen Anne style	An asymmetrical house style, marked by multiple gables and two-story, often brick, construction. Features include shingles in gable end, sunburst in gable, bay windows, decorative wood working, turrets, and/or multi-paned windows.
rubblestone	Rough, unhewn building stones or flints, generally not laid in regular courses.
rock-faced masonry	Stone masonry with a rough, three-dimensional face, as opposed to ashlar which is smooth.
roof truss	Beams or joists supporting roof. Sometimes applied on the exterior of a gable as an ornamental detail.
rusticated	Masonry cut in massive blocks separated from each other by deep joints, employed to give a rich and bold texture to an exterior wall.
segmental arch	Gently rounded window top, usually of brick or stone. On homes may indicate 1880 or earlier construction date. On commercial buildings used in the 1880s, 1890s, and early 1900s.
shingle	A thin piece of wood, slat, metal, or asbestos laid in overlapping rows to cover the roofs and walls of buildings. Notable when wood shingling appears in the gable end of a house or on the exterior walls. Shapes of shingles include fishscale (rounded) and variegated.
side gabled	Gable(s) perpendicular to street front. House is parallel to street.
siding	Placed over exterior walls. Aluminum and vinyl siding, which are not considered as contributing the houses' integrity, are Modern siding is wider and shinier than historic wooden siding. Siding materials from the 1940s included asphalt and asbestos
sill	Horizontal piece or member beneath a window, door, or other opening.

single-hung window	A window having a lower vertically sliding sash, and an upper, fixed portion.
spindlework	Woodworking such as railings or balustrades, composed of short, turned or circular ornaments that resemble spindles.
spindlework frieze	Decorative wooden band below the roof of a porch.
stucco	An exterior finish for masonry or frame walls usually composed of cement, sand and hydrated lime mixed with water and laid on wet. Often considered to degrade a building's history integrity.
sunburst	A decorative wooden pattern found in the gable end, that suggests the rays radiating from a sun. Considered a Queen Anne detail.
transom window	Window panel above a door or window.
triangular knee brace	A supporting piece, often L-shaped, projecting from a wall to support a roof, cornice, or other item.
truncated hip	Hipped roof that terminates in a flat plane, rather than point.
turned porch posts	Rounded, shaped posts made by turning on a lathe.
vernacular	Common style, constructed by local craftsman or home owner. Subdivided by building material: either masonry (brick, stone, stucco) or wood-frame (clapboard or dropped exterior walls). Housing sub-types based on plot plan: front-gabled, side-gabled, gabled-L, cross-gabled, hipped box.
vestibule	Enclosed entrance foyer at front entrance of house.
vestibule porch	A glass enclosed exterior porch.
window, bay	Projecting, often three-sided window, associated with Queen Anne style home.
window, dormer	A small gabled or shed-roofed window projecting from a roof.
window, oriel	A projecting polygonal or curved window unit supported on brackets or corbels. Distinguished from a bay window which rises from the foundation and has a rooted rather than suspended appearance.
egg and dart trim	Ornamental pattern used on metal cornices on commercial buildings. Inspired by classical Greek architecture, it features alternating pattern of ovals and arrow-shaped objects.
window, Palladian	A three-part window consisting of a tall, arched window flanked by two shorter, square-topped ones.

¹ Smith, Phyllis, Once A Coal Miner – The Story of Colorado’s Northern Coal Field, Boulder: Pruett Publishing, 1989, p. 1.

² Interview with Joe Distel, June 24, 1999.

³ Mary Miller’s Bank of Lafayette begun in 1900 went bankrupt after the 1910 – 1914 Long Strike. The bank building at 400 Simpson burned to the ground in the 1920s.

⁴ Interviews with Clarence Waneka and Iva Whipple, June 8, 1999.

⁵ Interview with Clarence Waneka, June 8, 1999.

⁶ Interview with Joe Distel, June 24, 1999.

⁷ William P. Rogers, The Coal Primer, Van Buren, Arkansas: Valley Press, Inc., 1978, p. 10.

- ⁸Joanna Sampson, Marshall Mesa, Boulder: Boulder County Open Space, 1998, p. 1.
- ⁹Smith, Phyllis, pp. 27, 69, 72, and 89.
- ¹⁰Hutchison, Survey and Settlement, Lafayette: Morrell Graphics, 1994, p. 37.
- ¹¹Turney, Murray-Williams
- ¹²Boulder-Weld Coal Field, Lafayette Area; Map BW-3, State of Colorado Mined Land Reclamation Division, Subsidence Protection Program; Denver: Johnson & Higgins, Schnable Engineering Associates, 1988.
- ¹³Lafayette News, March 16, 1983.
- ¹⁴Ubbelohde, Maxine Benson, and Duane A. Smith, A Colorado History, Sixth Edition, Boulder: Pruett Publishing, 1988., p. 206.
- ¹⁵Terrace Continuation of Lafayette Thematic Resource.
- ¹⁶Hutchison, Treeless Plain to Thriving City, p. 114.
- ¹⁷National Register Nomination for the Coal Mining Era Thematic, Boulder: Community Collaborative Services, 1985.
- ¹⁸Hutchison, Survey and Settlement, p. 16.
- ¹⁹Hutchison, Treeless Plain to Thriving City, p. 243.
- ²⁰Interview with Clarence Waneka, June 7, 1999.
- ²¹Hutchison, Treeless Plain to Thriving City, p. 185.
- ²²Hutchison, Treeless Plain to Thriving City, p. 16.
- ²³Hutchison, Survey and Settlement, p. 106.
- ²⁴Interview with Effie Amicarella, June 24, 1999.
- ²⁵Burlinton Northern is a 1970s company formerly the Burlington & Missouri River, and later the Chicago, Burlington & Quincy. Burlington ran the Colorado & Southern as a subsidiary until 1898. Most of C&S was spun off of the Union Pacific railroad during the 1890s.
- ²⁶Interview with Lucille Harrison, June 8, 1999.
- ²⁷According to Blanche Moon, Mrs. Miller visited miners in the tent colony at Gooseberry Gulch to see that they had adequate food and shelter
- ²⁸Connaroe, Carolyn, The Louisville Story, Louisville: Louisville Times, 1978, p. 51.
- ²⁹Water system bond promotional, Denver: William E. Sweet Co., 1921.
- ³⁰"Lafayette Falls Before Flames Fanned By a Gale," Denver: Denver Times, Jan. 24, 1900.
- ³¹Interview with Clarence Waneka, June 8, 1999.
- ³²Hutchison, Treeless Plain to Thriving City, p. 7.
- ³³Interview with Bev Smith, April 12, 1999.
- ³⁴Interview with Joe Distel, June 24, 1999.
- ³⁵Interview with Clarence Waneka, June 8, 1999.
- ³⁶Interview with Lucille Harrison, June 8, 1999.
- ³⁷Interview with Joe Distel, June 24, 1999.
- ³⁸It appears that many assessor's construction dates were actually derived from the Sanborn maps, as most date to 1900 or 1908. This could be due to loss of records in the 1932 Boulder County Courthouse fire.
- ³⁹Interview with Jim and Beth Hutchison, June 15, 1999.
- ⁴⁰Interview with Lucille Harrison, June 8, 1999.
- ⁴¹Interview with Lucille Harrison, June 8, 1999
- ⁴²Hutchison, Treeless Plain to Thriving City, p. 30.
- ⁴³Interview with Jim and Beth Hutchison, June 15, 1999.
- ⁴⁴Ownership records provided by Jim and Beth Hutchison, June 15, 1999.
- ⁴⁵Interview with Beth Hutchison, Lafayette Historical Society by Cathleen Norman, March 25, 1999.
- ⁴⁶Interview with Lucille Harrison, June 8, 1999
- ⁴⁷Interview with Jim and Beth Hutchison, June 15, 1999.